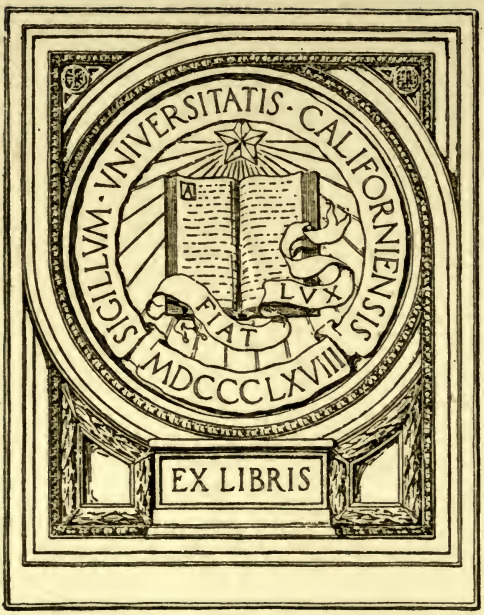
WITTE ARRIVES

ELIAS TOBENKIN


SIGILLVM · VNIVERSITATIS · CALIFORNIENSIS
LVX
FIAT
MDCCCLXVIII
EX LIBRIS

961
T628
W

WITTE ARRIVES

"MASHA AND HER CHILDREN WERE ADMITTED TO AMERICA"

—*Page 1*

WITTE ARRIVES

A NOVEL

BY

ELIAS TOBENKIN

WITH A FRONTISPIECE BY J. HENRY

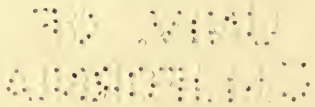
"Was I not made the man I am
By Omnipotent time?"
Goethe's *Prometheus*

NEW YORK
FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

Copyright, 1916, by
THE NEW YORK HERALD COMPANY

Copyright, 1916, by
FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY

All rights reserved, including that of translation into foreign languages



TO
RAE SCHWID TOBENKIN

343156

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	In a Strange Land	1
II	Taking Root	19
III	The Long Lost Brother	39
IV	Siberian Echoes	48
V	Clara Marries	61
VI	College Days	75
VII	A Reporter	89
VIII	Chicago	106
IX	The Road to Nowhere	122
X	The New Year	134
XI	A Drowning World	145
XII	Marriage	160
XIII	The Covenant	173
XIV	War on the Unborn	186
XV	The New King	195
XVI	Letters — and More Letters	209
XVII	The End of a Dream	222
XVIII	The Promise	236
XIX	Helen Dies	242
XX	Gray Days	255
XXI	Father and Son	268
XXII	The Book of Life	282
XXIII	Old Sorrows and a New Life	293

WITTE ARRIVES

WITTE ARRIVES

CHAPTER I

IN A STRANGE LAND

CASTLE GARDEN, the mysterious institution which inspired Masha Witkowski and her ship companions with so much dread, passed out of her horizon unnoticed. While she was bracing herself for the ordeal at the hands of the immigration officials — an ordeal concerning which her husband had forewarned her and carefully prepared her in his letters — a young man, simply uniformed, came up to where she and her three children sat huddled together beside their bundles. He looked at the card which was pinned to her shawl and made a sign for her to follow him. Inside a railing another man examined her tickets and addresses and, barely moving his lips, emitted an indistinct sound. Whereupon the first man led them through an iron gate to a bench in the waiting-room.

Masha Witkowski and her three children had been admitted to America, and they were not aware of it.

The family had hardly finished its belated noon meal — purchased from one of the stands in the waiting-room — when a man again came up. Mrs. Witkowski, who in the progress of her long journey from the Russian Pale to the New World had learned to have her tickets ever ready and to hand them in response to every question she did not understand, did so on this occasion too. Her instinct had not deceived her. The man looked at the tickets and nodded approvingly. He then pointed to their bundles and made motions with his arms indicating that they should pick them up. When his orders were understood, he started out of the building with Masha and her children following him at a run.

There came a short ride on a ferry, and then more waiting in a big room which the immigrant family presumed was a railway station, while their guide was talking through a grated window to a man inside and was receiving some long slips of paper — more tickets, Masha guessed. Then came the train with a welcome surprise — a conductor who greeted them in German.

There was a difference of centuries between the German which the American conductor spoke and the ghetto Yiddish of Masha Witkowski and her children. Nevertheless she and her children were cheered to the marrow. With a man who spoke German they felt kinship. Masha even took it as a good omen. She

put her questions in the most cosmopolitan Yiddish she could summon to her command.

One of her first questions was when they would arrive in Spring Water. The conductor could not make out her pronunciation of the name of the American town, and she handed him a slip of paper with her husband's address. The trainman consulted a time table and told her that she would reach her destination at nine o'clock Thursday night.

At this a solemn look came into Masha's face, Her eyes remained hazy for some minutes. . . .

So then this Spring Water, which for four years was only a phrase to write down on an envelope once a week, this Spring Water was a real place, as real as the little town she had left behind in the Russian Pale. The conductor knew of it. He found it in a book. He even knew the hour when the train would get there, when they would arrive there — to her husband — to their father.

The train had left the last stretches of suburban panorama and was sweeping into the broad open country. Her children, Harry and Emil, aged respectively sixteen and ten, and her twelve-year-old daughter, Clara, their heads and faces protruding slightly out of the raised window, were following intently the shifting landscape and changing scenes.

Masha looked beyond the heads of her children through the open window, but with unseeing eyes.

Her vision and thoughts were turned inward. . . . She was thinking of her husband, of Aaron Witkowski. Four years she had not seen him — four of the best years. She was only thirty-six when he left for America. At first it seemed as if she would never be able to bear being away from him that long. . . . But time proved the conqueror — it tamed her. There were innumerable nights that were long, terribly long, nights when it seemed that the dawn would never break, that day would never come. . . . But if the nights, and frequently even the days, were long, the weeks and the months and the years sped on. And now the terrible years of separation, of passionate longing and unuttered confidences were over. Thursday night she would see him — Poor Aaron, how he must have changed in these years!

A tear fell from her eyes. That aroused her. Her children must not see her cry now that they were in America, that they were speeding toward him and were only separated from their father by the trifling space of three days' travel.

Her children, however, had not noticed her dimmed eyes. The train was now rolling along a broad stretch of farming country. Every thirty seconds a home flashed into view, a neatly painted house and barn and well all to itself — an American farm such as Aaron had so often pictured to them in his letters. The children drank in the sight without comment or exclama-

tion. The scenes were too absorbing, too thrilling for them to waste the least energy or time on anything but seeing.

The train passed within half a hundred feet of a big load of hay that was pulled by a pair of fine gray horses. The young farmer who was sitting on top of the load removed his wide-brimmed straw hat and smiled and nodded to the children. All three of them were so astonished by this unexpected greeting from a man they had never seen before, from an American, that for some moments they were unable to return the greeting. Clara was the first to come to herself, and, protruding her head and chest far out of the window, she waved her handkerchief in the direction of the wagon which the speeding train was fast leaving behind.

"Are not they splendid, these Americans?" Clara said, addressing her brothers. Harry wanted to say something in reply, but there was a lump in his throat, so touched was he by the kindly greeting of the stranger. Emil had not made the slightest stir from his position at the window and was still looking at the load of hay, which had by now grown exceedingly small. The man on top of the wagon now looked like a little boy no bigger than himself.

In after years the two brothers and the sister often recalled the smile and greeting of the young farmer on the hay wagon — the first greeting they had received

from a stranger, and a Gentile — their first American smile.

Evening was falling, a mild August evening. The soft breeze that beat against their faces was delightfully soothing. None of the children spoke. They listened. The wind seemed to be making music. The rapid, even strides which the train was taking through space fell in rhythmic waves. Little Emil moved away from the window, sank back in the seat and closed his eyes. He had a vague consciousness of having lived through such sensations, of having heard that music before, but he could not recall where. . . . When he opened his eyes again it was dark. Night had settled upon everything. After a while the train cut through a small village. The houses of the village were interwoven with trees and the streets were studded with lights. It was the first time the immigrant family saw such a profusion of lights in streets, and it provoked comment.

With such a delightful wind blowing in their faces it seemed to the children that they would never fall asleep. Soon, however, the breeze, which had been so refreshing and invigorating at first, began to exhaust them. The weariness seemed to grow momentarily. The windows were lowered. The bundles were arranged into pillows. The tired limbs were twisted into half-sitting, half-reclining positions, and the brothers

and the sister were soon asleep under the watchful eye of their mother, who was leaning back in the seat still thinking her own thoughts.

In Chicago the immigrant train disbanded. Mrs. Witkowski and her children were lined up on the platform along with other aliens like themselves. Men were running up and down in front of these lines of foreigners, and simple but touching reunions took place. Here a man recognized his wife and children. There a son recognized his old father, a brother recognized a sister. Masha and her children were placed in a carriage, and there followed a brief journey over strange-looking city streets that were filled with people, despite the fact that the night was already advanced. The driver turned the immigrant family over to a policeman, who took them into what they again recognized as a railway waiting-room.

"*Sprechen Sie Deitsch?*" Masha tried her luck, as she had often done during the journey. But the red-haired policeman shook his head, "no Dutch," and proceeded to make signs to the woman and the children to take possession of the benches. They had a long wait ahead of them.

Masha sat up the greater part of the night watching over her children who lay sound asleep on the benches. She was afraid to go to sleep lest she miss her train, or something befall them. Toward morning, however, her power of resistance waned. She leaned against

the arm of a bench and in a few minutes was sound asleep.

The morning was well advanced when she awoke. She looked about. Her children were nowhere to be seen. Alarmed she rushed out into the next room. Here she found them lined up against the window and looking out into the street. She intended to upbraid them for having scared her so, but reproach died on her lips when she beheld the fascinating sight the open window afforded.

As far as her eye could see stretched giant buildings. The street below was seething with people who were going to work. But to her it seemed as if all these men and women were out for a holiday jaunt. They were all dressed in such fine clothes. The women all wore hats. How different all this was from the gray, drab existence at home, in Russia. There was not a single barefooted peasant in the entire street. . . . Even the horses and wagons had an air of aristocracy about them. The wagons were painted. The brass buckles of the horses' harness sparkled in the sunshine. The drivers on these wagons seemed care-free, complacent, so different from the peasant Ivan, who used to drive her to the fair in a neighboring village for half a ruble, and who made a meal on a piece of black bread and an onion. Mrs. Witkowski now began to understand what her husband had meant by the words "dignity of labor"— words which he had so often

used in his letters in which he tried to initiate her into the American view of life.

A policeman took Mrs. Witkowski to a restaurant across the street from the station and supervised her purchase of coffee and rolls. When the meal was finished, the officer again went over to Masha. He examined her tickets and pointed to the figure twelve on his watch. She guessed that he meant that their train would leave at noon. Though she still had a three hours' wait before her, Mrs. Witkowski gathered her children and imparted the news to them, and they began making ready for this last lap of their five weeks' journey.

They washed and combed with an air of deliberation, as if they were performing a religious rite. The children brushed their old-world clothes, tried to smooth out the wrinkles and creases in them. As they worked away with brush and towel the color mounted to their cheeks and their hearts began to beat faster. It was not make-believe this time. It was real. In a few hours they would see their father — they would all be reunited for always — always — always. . . .

Chicago lay miles to the rear. The train was speeding through beautiful country. The farmhouses here were even more attractive, larger, richer than those they had seen on the first afternoon of their journey from Castle Garden to Spring Water. But none of these things interested Mrs. Witkowski's children.

The landscape, the farmhouses that dashed past their eyes seemed more like a dream to them. What was real was the approaching meeting with their father. None of them talked, each preferring to be left alone with his or her own thoughts and reminiscences.

The ten-year-old Emil, his head resting against the plush back of the seat and his eyes closed, was dreaming of his father. He was visualizing him not as he expected to see him in a few hours, but as he knew him on that night, the night when he, his father, the big man with the big beard and imposing appearance, wept. . . . That night and his father's tears were a secret of Emil's, a secret of which he was proud and which made him feel so much older than he was. It was his father's farewell night. . . .

That evening, Emil recalled, their house was filled with people. Everybody in the village came to bid Aaron Witkowski farewell. The aged rabbi himself sought out their humble cottage. The rabbi sat across the table from his father. For some time the two talked about the Torah, the law and Judaism. Then the white-haired patriarch rose, lifted his hands, placed them on Aaron's head and prayed. The two kissed, and mumbling a blessing the rabbi walked out of the house leaning heavily on his staff.

Emil had fallen asleep long before the last group of well-wishers had left the house. He was awakened by the pressing of something warm against his face.

His father's lips were resting against his forehead. Aaron was murmuring Emil's name and was weeping. Emil longed to put his arms about his father's neck and tell him how he would miss him, how he would think of him every moment until the day they were reunited. He felt the tears rising in his own throat, but he was struck with awe at the hot tears which were rolling from his father's eyes. Never had he known his father to weep before. So he moved away, pulled the quilt over his head and was soon asleep. . . .

In the morning, when the peasant cart stood before the house and Aaron had taken leave of every one, he turned once more to his six-year-old son. He slid his fingers through Emil's hair, smoothed his forehead with his hands and began to talk hastily, brokenly. He wanted Emil to obey his mother and to learn well. When they came together again he would question him on everything he had studied, he would want to see what progress his son had made. He must be a nice boy, never associate with the rough boys, never fight. He must study hard — accomplish. . . .

The ten-year-old Emil recalled all of these things now. But he dwelt most on his father's tears. There was a vague pride stirring through his little breast. He felt as if by those tears he had been taken by his father into confidence. He was eager to see him, eager to tell his father how he had carried out his wishes.

There was a change of trains at six-thirty. A gray-

headed conductor helped them with their bags and parcels into a waiting train. He smiled every time he passed them. When he took the tickets from Mrs. Witkowski, or rather the three stubs which she held out to him, he observed them for some moments, punched them slowly and put them in his pocket. Masha made a motion as if to ask him for a receipt. But the conductor shook his head good-naturedly. A wave of excitement overcame Mrs. Witkowski and her children, especially Clara. All through the journey the girl had kept watch over her mother to see that she did not lose any of the tickets and papers which she had received from the various ship and railroad agents. Now the last scraps of these once long and imposing-looking tickets were gone. That signified to them more than words could express that they were really at the end of their long and weary journey.

It grew dark. Every eight or ten minutes the train stopped, and a passenger got off or on. The railway stations here were small, and they all looked as if they had been cast from the same mold. Did Spring Water, too, have such a station? Did it, too, have so many lights in the streets at night? It would soon be nine o'clock. They would soon be there. They would see. How soon? They were becoming a little tired from the overstrain of excited watching — broken up. They would settle down for a little rest. It must be a whole hour yet till nine o'clock.

Just as they settled down for a rest the conductor came in. He pointed to their parcels and said something. They all jumped up, seized their bundles and started to go. He smiled and waved to them to settle down again. They sank back into their seats, disappointed.

Harry, who had his head out of the window, caught a glimpse of the edge of a city. The electric lights were blazing by the thousands. He communicated his find. They waited. After a lapse of a minute and a half — which to them seemed a long, a terribly long time — the conductor came in once more. He again pointed to their parcels. They picked them up and held them under their arms. He smiled approvingly. The train was slowing up. They began moving toward the front of the car. The railway platform now came in full view. Clara stood hard by the open window.

"Father, father," she cried wildly and burst toward the door. The few passengers, who had been dozing in their seats, sprang to their feet. When they caught sight of the little group of stampeding aliens, their alarm vanished, and a kindly, understanding look came into their eyes. They shifted over to the side of the car nearer the platform, raised the windows, and watched the reunion of the alien family with curious feelings. They knew that they would never forget the pathetic little scene to which they were accidental witnesses. . . .

There were three Russian Jewish families in Spring Water at that time — 1890 — and they were all at the Witte home that evening. Witkowski had changed his name to Witte soon after his arrival in America. Two of the families had known the Wittes in Europe. They had come from the same town. There was no end of questions about friends, acquaintances, distant relatives. It was after midnight when the visitors left, taking Harry and Clara with them for the night, for the Witte household was not yet in order. Emil, his father would not let from under his roof. He did not take his eyes from him all evening. How he had grown — what a little man he had become! He petted and caressed him, tried to smooth out the wrinkles on the child's forehead, and suppressed a sigh that a child should have wrinkles. Poor child of the Russian Pale!

But Masha put an end to his musings. It was time for Emil to go to sleep. They took him to a room adjoining their own bedroom, tucked him up in a nice new quilt and walked out with a smile. They did not kiss him good night. He seemed to them a little too big for such a demonstrative manifestation of tenderness.

As soon as all footsteps and noise had died out in the house, Emil slipped off the bed and stole on tiptoe to the window. The street was totally dark now, but above the moon was shining. He saw the outlines of

the houses distinctly in the moonlight. They all looked strange and new, so much grander than the thatched cottages in their native village, but they were so strange, so cold. And in these houses lived people who were strangers to him, whose language he did not understand, and who did not understand his. A painful, tender longing for his town, for his street, for his home, for his synagogue in Russia swept over him. He sank down on the floor beside the window and, putting his head down on the sill, cried softly but steadily for a long time. Then he crawled into bed again and fell asleep.

His father's hand playing with his hair awakened him. At the foot of the bed lay a new suit of clothes and fresh underclothes — the latter articles he had never worn in the Russian Pale. Beside the bed stood a new pair of shoes. While his father was helping him dress in these unaccustomed clothes, Emil was giving account of himself, the account he had waited four years to give. He was telling his father what he had learned in those years. Yes, he was through with three volumes of the Talmud, and in the last six months the rabbi had taught him the law. Aaron pricked up his ears.

"You studied the law?"

"Yes," said Emil eagerly. "The rabbi thought I might not have an opportunity to continue my Hebrew studies in America, so he wanted me to know a little

about the laws of the Jews, even if I was somewhat too young to study the Shulkhan Orukh."

"And what did you study in the Shulkhan Orukh, what laws?" the father asked, gazing at the child with suppressed amazement.

Emil recited a long list of dietary laws, laws about the keeping of the Sabbath and the principal holidays; the laws relating to the Passover and the Day of Atonement.

"It is good, it is good," Aaron said and stroked his son's cheek. Observing Emil dressed and ready to go downstairs, he moved toward the window, the child following him. He gazed intently for some moments at his little son, as if he were searching for something in his face, his eyes, and then started to speak hurriedly, almost confusedly.

"You will go to school here," Aaron began, and his ten-year-old son who was already versed in the Law of Israel hung upon every word his parent uttered. "You will go to school here. But it will be a different sort of a school from the one you went to in Russia. Different studies, worldly studies. . . . You see it is a different land we are in now, a better country — the best country on earth. It is not only overflowing with milk and honey, but with opportunities. Here there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile. . . . If you study hard you can make anything you want of your-

self. . . . You can become a judge, a lawyer, a teacher — anything. This is a free land. The people are free and all are equal. All roads are free to every one. . . . Jews have the same rights as all other people. . . . No differences, no distinctions. . . . They are not discriminated against. One of the greatest citizens in this city is a Jew. . . ."

Aaron rambled on in this manner for some time. Emil's eyes were wide with attention, and two red spots appeared on his cheeks from the strain of following his father's words and thoughts. Masha made an end to the exalted discourse by calling her husband downstairs.

When Emil caught sight of his brother and sister dressed in American clothes, he was taken aback, so great was the difference the garments made in their looks. He was going to comment upon this difference, but Clara already had him by the hand and led him into the kitchen to show her mother how fine Emil looked in his short trousers.

"Why, he looks like a little child — not like a boy of ten," Clara cried, her eyes glistening with excitement.

Aaron and his wife exchanged glances at the expense of their children, from whose shoulders their American clothes had lifted a good deal of premature age. Masha's eyes grew dim, and in Aaron's throat

there arose a lump. Both busied themselves with the dishes, Aaron explaining to his wife the uses of certain utensils that she had never seen in the old world.

In a few minutes he led the way to the table, and the Witte family sat down to its first breakfast in America.

CHAPTER II

TAKING ROOT

THE next two years saw a remarkable shift in the fortunes of the little immigrant colony in Spring Water. The Nathans had ceased to be pedlers and now owned one of the most prosperous general stores. The Rosen boys intrenched themselves almost over night, it seemed, as the leading wholesale fruit dealers of the town, and their father discarded his pedler's wagon and was supervising things in the warehouse. The three Goldman brothers were prospering in the hide and wool business.

The Witte family alone stood in the same place. Aaron still dragged himself from farmhouse to farmhouse five days a week, peddling his far from up-to-date stock of notions and minor articles of clothing. Yet Aaron Witte was by no means displeased with the new world or with his lot in it. If he was still a pedler it was a matter of his own volition.

The afternoon of Masha's first day in the new world, Aaron took her out for a stroll along outskirts of the city. It was in the course of this promenade that he mapped out their future.

The Jewish immigrant in a town like Spring Water could choose one of two ways, he told her. He could choose the road which led to prosperity, and even wealth. But then he had to give up much that is sacred to the orthodox Jew. He had to work on the Sabbath, reverse the order of the Lord and rest on the first instead of on the seventh day. In the big cities, in New York or Chicago, the Jew could still cling to the old order and get by. It was different in the country, where there were only four or half a dozen Jewish families to a town. To stick to orthodoxy here meant to step out of the race for prosperity.

Aaron was not unreasonable with the men who chose this road, who sacrificed orthodoxy for worldly success and security. The Talmud made great allowances where the question of a living entered. But for himself he had chosen the other road. He kept the Sabbath and thereby deprived himself not only of a good deal of revenue, for Saturday was the best business day, but also of the chance of ever going into business in the city. His horse and wagon could be put in the barn over Saturday and Sunday. A store could not be closed for two days. It especially could not be closed on Saturday when all the farmers come to town to trade.

He was willing, Aaron went on, to give in in small matters. He could yield up trifles. As she saw, his beard was trimmed considerably. But trimming one's

beard was after all a minor matter. It was not an infraction of the law, merely of a custom. Keeping the Sabbath, on the other hand, was one of the fundamentals of the Hebrew faith. One could not tamper with the foundation without endangering the entire structure. . . . He was too old a man to change his mode of living to suit the newer conditions. His training, his ideals would rebel against such a course and would make him unhappy. He felt that he could not make such a dent in his creed without robbing his conscience of peace forever. Their children — they no doubt would choose the other road. But he and she must follow the path of their fathers. Besides, they were not so badly off. He was making a fair living. And the children, Harry and Clara, would be taking care of themselves soon. Harry would probably go to work at once. Clara would soon find a position in some store — the young ones pick up the language quickly. So they would have only Emil to take care of.

Masha listened to her husband's voice more than to his words. She was drinking in the familiar sound of which she had been deprived four long years. Nevertheless, the words were not without their soothing effect. They set her mind at ease. She had heard that America often transforms men. The struggle for existence makes them hard-hearted, destroys their finer sensibilities. Every time she received a letter from

Aaron she had studied it for just such changes in her husband. But she had found none. Still letters are so brief. And four years — what changes might not a man undergo in so long a time!

Aaron's words set her at ease. But they also provoked a mild resentment. What was he so apologetic about? Why did he feel so guilty for not exchanging the Sabbath for cash, for not bartering his religion for prosperity? Did he not know that her mind was at one with his on this subject? Was not she a daughter of Israel? Who cared for riches that could be obtained only at the sacrifice of one's faith?

But her resentment faded the moment she opened her mouth to speak. Instead of upbraiding Aaron for uncalled-for apologies, she merely assented to everything he had said, and the conversation shifted to the children, centering about little Emil. The Hebrew teacher in Russia had praised the lad highly. The boy had an open mind, the teacher had said. The Talmud was like child's play to him. He studied the law and comprehended it like a grown person.

Emil, meantime, was strolling up and down the sidewalk about his home, observing things with eager eyes. The neatly constructed, painted homes, with porches and lawns in front of them, offered such a striking contrast to the cumbersome buildings in the Russian village where he was born. There was youthfulness about the houses, about the well-paved streets, and the

people looked so young. And they were so cheerful.

At one side of the street on a large stretch of vacant ground, children, little boys and girls his own age, were playing. The boys were tossing a ball; the girls looked on and gurgled every time the boys engaged in a scrimmage for the ball. The little immigrant, who had waded through three volumes of the Talmud and many tracts of the law, looked at the boys playing just as he looked at the painted houses and the paved street and the nice green lawns — as an observer looks at things that are interesting but are in no way a part of him, can in no way concern him.

It never occurred to Emil that he, too, might be playing ball like the children there. Though many of the boys at play were so much bigger than himself, and older, he yet felt unconsciously as if he were way above them in age. He wondered what these boys were thinking, what their aim in life was. For of course everybody must have an aim in life, like himself. Until that morning his aim had been to get to his father in America and tell him how much he had accomplished. Since his father had talked to him about school and opportunities, his aim was "to make something of himself," as his father had put it, a lawyer, a judge or a teacher. Certainly he must grasp the opportunities which this country offered, as his father had said. . . .

As he stood thus engrossed in his own thoughts, he saw a little girl, who had been observing him intently for some time, leave the company and walk over toward him. She was a child of eight with a delicate face and sparkling black eyes. Her jet-black hair was falling in ringlets about her shoulders. As she approached him nearer she smiled. Emil started to move away out of her path, but she addressed him — in Yiddish.

"You came last night?" she asked, smiling.

Emil did not answer. He looked at her with surprise. She spoke Yiddish with such a strange un-Jewish accent.

"Why don't you answer me?" the little girl continued, smiling. "You don't look like a 'greener' at all," she added.

"Are you — Jewish?" Emil finally managed to blurt out.

"Sure. My name is Lena Rosen. My mother was over to your house last night when you came. Do you want to come and play with us?"

"I can't, I don't know how," Emil answered in confusion. What he wanted to say was something entirely different. He wanted to tell her that a boy who had got through with three volumes of the Talmud must only play with children of his own sex — with boys. But so many of his old-world notions of what is proper had gone against the rocks in the course of

his journey to America, and especially in the half day he had been in Spring Water, that he checked himself, for fear that he might say something that was not proper.

"Oh, you will learn to play," the child persisted. "My brother — there he is, the fellow with the ball — could not play either, when he came here three years ago. Now he is the captain of the team, see?"

Emil did not understand what she meant by "captain" and "team," and little Lena was not conscious of having said anything to him that was not good Yiddish. Emil was interested in her brother, however.

"And your brother did not speak English when he came here?" he asked.

"No, and I did not either, not a word. And now mama scolds him because he won't talk Jewish to her. I do though. I always talk Jewish to mama. Can you add? I can add and subtract."

Emil not only could add and subtract, he could multiply and divide as well. He had gone to a teacher in Russia for two hours a day to supplement his Talmudic studies with worldly learning. He described his studies to her animatedly. At last he had safe ground to stand on.

Lena listened to him and was impressed.

"You know much," she said. "In three weeks school starts. I'll go back to school and I'm going

to learn much, too. Can I take you to school the first day? You have to have somebody take you there, you know. I'll take you to the principal, Miss Upham. She is nice. She likes children who come from the old world. They learn so quick, she says."

Lena kept her word. The day school opened she was at the Witte home bright and early. Aaron was going to take Emil to the principal in person. But Lena assured him it was not necessary. And Lena's mother said the same. So the little girl piloted Emil through his first day in an American school, and thereafter the two were often to be seen walking side by side with their school books. At the end of two years Emil had left Lena one grade below him.

The first Jewish wedding in Spring Water was an event that transcended the confines of the immigrant colony, which by this time had increased to a dozen families. It was a real romance, and it got into the papers. A young man, who had established himself as a vegetable huckster, had sent for his bride in the old world. The entire Jewish community took an interest in this affair of the heart, and a very elaborate wedding was held. A rabbi was called in from a city eighty miles distant to officiate.

After the ceremony was performed there came toasts and short speeches. Each one said something commendatory, laudatory about the groom and the bride.

The talk was very intimate, homelike, simple. When the turn came for Aaron Witte to speak, he rose, filled his glass and began with the customary wishes and congratulations. A Biblical phrase slipped his tongue, an allusion to Jacob marrying in a strange land, far away from parents and friends. This allusion opened up a flood of words and feelings. And the higher Aaron's voice rose, the more intense became the silence in the room. . . .

He spoke about the new world, about America, about the significance of this wedding to the Jewish community in Spring Water, the debt which this young couple — which they all — owed this new world that had been so kind to them, had offered them a haven from persecution, had opened its bountiful stores to them without discrimination, to them — oppressed, driven Jews. . . .

The people looked at one another surprised, astonished. They had never paid more than passing attention to the quiet, unassuming pedler. They had never suspected him of so much erudition, of such a gift of speech. Their respect for him grew with their silence. But Aaron was oblivious of the one as of the other. He spoke evenly and feelingly about their duties to their adopted country. They must dedicate themselves to a high order of citizenship. They must make themselves worthy of the blessings and the opportunities which were bestowed upon them freely,

gratuitously, but for which the fathers of this country once fought, and died. He wound up with a toast to America and freedom.

The toast was drunk, and then people crowded about Aaron and shook his hand, and praised him and approved his utterances, as if his speech was the thing they came there for — the bride and groom were forgotten for the moment. A reporter from the *Sentinel,* the only morning paper in town, who was interested in the wedding and was present throughout the ceremony, now called aside one of the Rosen boys and questioned him about the speech, what had been said. Young Rosen translated some of Aaron's remarks, and the next morning there was a half-column report of the glowing tribute Witte had paid to America in the Spring Water *Sentinel.* Aaron could not read the article in the paper, but Emil read it and was very happy and proud, as if this were the thing he had all along expected from his father.

The impromptu speech of Aaron had a notable effect upon the life of the Witte family. An old, half-forgotten incident in Aaron's life was heaved out into the light and for weeks was a topic of conversation in the Jewish community, as if the thing had taken place only yesterday. It was the story of Witte's marriage, his and Masha's love affair. The story briefly was this:

In his youth Aaron was famed as a scholar of the

Talmud. Everybody looked forward to his becoming a rabbi. When he reached the age when a ghetto youth in the Russian Pale might properly think of marriage, the marriage brokers of the town, the "schadchens," were hot on his trail. Many a rich man coveted the famed youth for a son-in-law. There was a rabbinate and fortune ahead of him if he married "into the right family." Aaron's father, who was poor, encouraged the marriage brokers and urged his son to marry wisely. But Aaron seemed in no hurry to get married, and the plans of his father and the anxious schadchens lagged behind.

Then came the critical day. The richest man in town sent a marriage broker with a proposal. He wanted Aaron for his daughter. It was a sure rabbinate, standing, riches. There was no dallying any longer. Aaron's father took a hand in the matter. His son must decide at once. Then the strange, fairly unbelievable thing happened. Aaron decided, but not in favor of the rich man's daughter, whom he had not even cared to meet or see, but in favor of their neighbor's daughter, Masha — in favor of a girl without a rich father and without a dowry, but possessing deep, black eyes that looked out upon the world feelingly and a little sadly from under long black lashes.

There was a storm, of course. Masha's father was only a tailor. Aaron's father could not find words enough to express his disapproval, to utter his disap-

pointment. But Aaron clung to his choice. With his marriage to Masha his prospective career as a rabbi came to an end. He set up a Hebrew school and for some years managed to eke an existence as a teacher. Later he went into business.

This story of Aaron's and Masha's love, which to them was beginning to appear as a half-forgotten legend, now made them friends in Spring Water, made them distinguished. The young especially were taken by it. Aaron Witte, then, was not one of those old-fashioned Jews, even if he was orthodox. . . .

The Jewish community in Spring Water was now large enough to maintain a place of worship at least for the more important Hebrew holidays. A hall was rented for that purpose and a congregation organized. Witte was unanimously chosen president. On holidays, especially on New Year's Day and on the eve of the Day of Atonement, he would preach a short sermon. These sermons invariably won the approval of the congregation. For they were liberal in spirit. Witte did not leave out of consideration the exigencies of the times and conditions. He deplored the lapses in devotions into which the Jews of Spring Water in common with Jews all over America were falling. . . . But he made allowances too. There were many things to be taken into consideration, many reasons for this infringing on matters that are sacred. There were the differences in civilization, the demands of industry,

the inexorable struggle for existence — all pleading for leniency.

"Old man Witte"— after his speech at the wedding Aaron was spoken of as "Old Man Witte"— "certainly has his heart in the right place," was the comment on such a talk of his to the congregation. And the answer invariably was: "Yes, he has a wonderful brain. Did you hear the story how he missed becoming a rabbi? It is worth hearing. . . ."

One by one Witte's neighbors had moved into better homes in the more aristocratic part of town. Time had dealt kindly with them. They were growing wealthy. Their business prosperity not only made possible but demanded more style and elaborateness in their homes and social life. Most of the older men, however, would frequently drive up to Witte's home to talk over communal matters. Often, indeed, they would seek his counsel before the consummation of an important family or business event. "Talk it over with Old Man Witte," became a common phrase with the Jews of Spring Water.

It was the first warm Saturday in May. Aaron pulled out a rocker from the parlor, seated himself comfortably on the porch and unfolded the *Weekly Gazette*. Masha and Clara, now nearing seventeen, were standing on the lawn near-by, studying the discomfited appearance of the precarious flower bed in front of them. The rain had washed it out almost

completely, and Clara had put so much labor on that flower bed. Now she feared she would have to plant it anew.

"Masha," Aaron called. He had just come across an item in the paper about their home town. It was so unusual to see their home village figure in print that he wanted to read the item to his wife. As he lifted his head from the paper, however, Aaron perceived a familiar figure coming up the street.

"Isn't that Miss Raymond coming?" Witte asked his wife, forgetting the item. Masha's eyes were better than his, and she instantly recognized the principal of the school which Emil attended. Miss Raymond, though still two houses away from the Wittes', smiled a greeting. Aaron and his wife rose from their seats. Was she coming to them? Why? She had never done so before.

It was about Emil that Miss Raymond came. He was to graduate in June. It was the middle of May then. Only a few weeks and he would be out of her control. Of course she had nothing to say about Emil's future. But she was interested in him, and she was a trifle anxious as to what Mr. and Mrs. Witte were planning to do with the lad.

She did not wish to intrude, she went on guardedly, but she thought she might advise them, if they did not already know it, that the high school was entirely free, there was no expense whatever to attend it. And

Emil was such a pupil. He simply absorbed things. It would be nice if he could go to high school. In fact it would be a pity if he did not go. For he had, she really believed, he had a great future before him. Few boys were so earnest about their studies at his age.

Mr. and Mrs. Witte did not understand everything Miss Raymond was saying. But they understood that Emil was being praised by his teacher. Clara took a hand at this juncture and in a few sentences in Yiddish made clear to her parents the import of Miss Raymond's visit.

"Of course, of course," Aaron hastened, speaking in a fairly solemn voice. Of course Emil would go to school, to high school. He meant his boy to get an education, of course. He would, God willing, even send him to the University. There was a far away look in his eyes.

The principal thanked him and Mrs. Witte. Then, as if she had overlooked the real purpose of the visit, she began speaking hastily and in very earnest tones. Was Emil well? Was his health good? A startled look came into the faces of the father and mother. Why, was anything the matter with their boy? Had she noticed anything?

Miss Raymond tried to correct herself now. She began to allay their fears. She had noticed nothing. As far as she could see Emil was in the best of health. But he always kept to himself so much. He played so

little with the boys. She was sometimes afraid that he was too serious in his pursuits. They, his parents, should urge him to play more. It would be well to keep him back from reading and see that he got more exercise.

When Miss Raymond was gone, Mrs. Witte and her daughter recalled that they had forgotten to ask the teacher to sit down. Mrs. Witte began upbraiding Clara for her thoughtlessness. Aaron heard nothing of this. He was thinking over Miss Raymond's conversation. Straight ahead the sun was setting, leaving a fiery sky in its wake. A mellow spring day and a happy Sabbath was drawing to a close, but a new sun was rising before Witte's eyes, the sun of memories. . . .

In what the teacher had just said about Emil he saw, as if in a mirror, his own youth. "He does not play with the boys, he ought to be kept away from books, from reading." How like himself, like his own childhood.

His mother, peace to her memory, arose before his eyes. How often would she wake up in the middle of a long winter night, come up to him where he sat absorbed in the Talmud, remind him of the late hour, and urge him to close the book and go to bed for his health's sake.

Witte forgot Emil for the moment and thought of his mother. A saintly woman she was. And she loved

him — Oh, how she loved him! When he set his heart on Masha and refused to marry the daughter of a rich man, throwing away thereby the sure chance of a career and fame as a rabbi, his mother was not angry with him. His father stormed and threatened. He even lifted his hand to strike Aaron in a burst of anger. But she, peace to her memory, stood between them.

Late that night, when his father was sleeping, and he, Aaron, was trying to forget the stormy scene of the evening behind a folio of the Talmud, his mother crept up to him and sat on the edge of a bench beside him.

She was in tears. But, she explained, they were tears of happiness. She was happy that he, Aaron, had chosen Masha, glad that he loved the girl so much. She was a good girl, Masha was — a golden child. She could not wish a better daughter-in-law. Masha would make him happy. And he must not worry because he was throwing away a rabbinate on account of the girl. It did not matter what one's occupation was, so long as one was happy. And he would be happy with Masha. And before the Lord we were all children. All alike, the humble and the mighty —

Poor, old mother, Witte mused. If she could only see Emil. There was a child after her heart. But she had not seen any of his children. She died before the first one came.

There were familiar steps far down the sidewalk.

Emil was coming from the library with several books under his arm. Aaron Witte rose and almost solemnly walked up to the gate to meet his son.

The high school brought father and son closer together. Witte could exercise comparatively little influence over Emil while the latter was still in the grades. He could not read English and his knowledge of arithmetic did not extend beyond simple fractions. With the high school things took a different turn.

As they sat down one Friday evening to their abundant Sabbath meal, Emil asked:

"Father, do you know a Jewish historian named Josephus?"

"Yes, yes," Witte's eyes snapped, "Josephus, of course; how do you come to know about Josephus?"

"There is a reference to him in my Roman history," Emil answered.

When the meal was over Witte rose from the table earlier than was his custom on the Sabbath eve. He fumbled for some time in a closet where he had stored away many of his Hebrew books. Finally he emerged with a small volume and took his place at the table once more.

He read to Emil a legend about Josephus contained in the volume. Then, his memory refreshed, he talked for a long time about the historian, the age he lived in, and the significance of that age in the history of Israel.

Masha looked by turns at her husband and her son. She was happy when her husband talked about books and learning. And she liked the gleam in Emil's eyes with which he followed his father's words.

On another occasion Emil told his father that the following week he would have to write a composition on Alexander the Great. Witte prepared himself for that week. He took the little Hebrew book with him to the country, and in the long winter evenings, spent at modest hotels or with friendly farmers, the old pedler read the legends and the sagas of the Talmud which dealt with Alexander the Great, for the benefit of his young son in the high school.

Emil listened eagerly to the Talmudic stories about the Persian conqueror which his father told him. They were so full of interest, so different from the dry facts and dates about the Persian king which the books he had access to gave.

Henceforth Emil kept his father advised about his studies. And Witte utilized his evenings in the country, reading, searching for information in his old Hebrew books which might be suited to his son's eager mind. The Friday evening meals now began to last until late in the night. Emil looked forward eagerly to these evenings. His mother thanked the Lord in silent prayer for them.

For she had seen some of the tragedies which schools and education bring into the homes of immigrants.

The children, who had gone through school, thought themselves superior to their "greenhorn" parents. They were disrespectful to them. In her house the school, education, united father and son more and more. It increased the respect of the son for the father. Often after these long, learned discussions between Aaron and Emil, Mrs. Witte would wipe a tear which had stolen into her eyes from sheer happiness.

Father and son would frequently go out for a walk together and talk over many things. The people of Spring Water noticed this, and their respect for Witte and his young son grew. They were greeted with deference by their fellow countrymen. The reputation of each was enhanced in their eyes through the association with the other.

CHAPTER III

THE LONG LOST BROTHER

IN the parlor of the Witte home hung an enlarged picture of a young man attired in the uniform of a Russian university student. Mrs. Witte avoided mentioning that picture or drawing attention to it in her husband's presence, and she taught her children to do likewise. The crayon portrait, hung in the most conspicuous corner of the room, was a chronic wound in the Witte household. Ever and anon it would break out and start bleeding.

It was a picture of Aaron's lost brother, Simeon. . . .

For months and months Aaron would give the picture merely a passing glance. Before an important holiday, however, the Passover or the New Year, he would steal up to it on tiptoe, wipe the dust off the glass, look at it for a long time, and then, covering his eyes with the palm of his hand, would plunge into deep meditation, as if holding a spiritual reunion with his lost brother. . . .

Aaron Witte was reading the *Weekly Gazette.* Masha sat in a chair a few feet away, the prayer-book in her lap. She was just finishing the last prayer of the long Sabbath service.

The *Gazette* slipped from Aaron's hand. When Masha looked up his face was ashen and his arms hung as if paralyzed. Aaron motioned to her to pick up the paper. He took it in his trembling hands and read the same paragraph over. No, his eyes were not deceiving him. He was not dreaming. It was there. He pointed the place out to his wife. She read it and the joyous import of the item came to her in a flash. Jubilantly she cried:

"He lives and he is free. He is coming."

Aaron had regained his composure by this time. He read the item in the paper once more, aloud. In a few sentences the *Gazette* stated that the well-known revolutionist, Simeon Witkowski, who, with a number of other nihilists, had been arrested and charged with attempting to assassinate the Czar, Alexander III, and had not been heard from since, had arrived in Switzerland after a sensational escape from Siberia.

It was soon after Aaron married that Simeon, his younger brother, left the village to go to Vilna. Simeon, too, had been destined by his father for the rabbinate, and had already gone in his Talmudic studies far beyond the courses which were offered in the local Hebrew school. Twice in the next four years Simeon came home for the Passover. Then after a long silence they received a letter from him from St. Petersburg. He had dropped his Talmudic studies, he informed his father — his mother had been dead for

some time — soon after his arrival in Vilna and had turned to the acquisition of a Russian, of a European education. In this he had been successful and had just passed with considerable excellence his entrance examination to the University, and was enrolled as a student in the medical faculty.

Aaron Witte recalled the astonishment with which his father, stern orthodox that he was, read the letter, the keen disappointment with which he relinquished forever the hope of seeing his son's name inscribed on the roster along with the names of the rabbis who were famous in Israel.

Simeon, however, never became a doctor. After a lapse of some time the chief of the gendarmes in the district drove up to the house where the white-haired father of Aaron and Simeon was living. The head of the gendarmes read to the old man a long official document from the authorities at St. Petersburg. His voice was a mixture of solemnity and anger, as he read it. The old man did not understand a word of what the chief of the gendarmes was saying, beyond hearing his son's, Simeon's, name mentioned at frequent intervals.

After he finished reading the imposing-looking document, which bore many government seals and stamps, the head of the gendarmes in a few plain words, liberally interspersed with oaths, imparted to the old man the information that his son Simeon had deliberately thrown himself outside the pale of men, that he had

joined an infamous band of plotters, nihilists, who had planned to take the life of the Little Father of "Holy Russia," the Czar, Alexander Alexandrowitch.

The last words came from beneath the mustache of the chief of the gendarmes like bullets fired off in rapid succession. With blazing eyes the secret service official looked at the trembling, white-faced Jew in front of him, expecting an approving answer. But the old man stammered forth weakly:

"Where is my boy now? What did they do with him?"

The chief of the gendarmes did not know what they had done with Simeon Witkowski. His orders were merely to apprise the father and search him, as well as every member of Simeon's family. The solicitude of the old man for his son roiled the official.

"What?" he thundered. "You still call him your son! A dog he is, an enemy of the people, a plotter on the life of the Little Father. You are forbidden to ask what became of him. The government knows what to do with such characters. Give him up for dead. That is my advice — unless you approve of the dog's conduct. Do you approve of it? Speak!"

The old man spoke. He swore, he trembled. He did not approve of his son's actions — never — never — He wept and kissed the official's hand. How could he approve of it? Was he not a loyal subject of the Czar? He loved the Czar, and prayed for him and for

the empire. . . . How could such a thought enter his son's mind!

The head of the gendarmes ordered half a dozen subordinates, who accompanied him, to search the house. From the Witkowski home they turned to other families in town and searched their premises. Every one remotely connected with the Witkowski household, or friendly to the old man, was searched. The chief of the gendarmes then sought out Aaron in the village where he lived. The same scene was reenacted there. The same instructions were given. He must not mention the name of his brother who had cast himself outside the pale of human beings by having designs on the Czar, by plotting the ruin of his country.

Aaron and his father were put under police surveillance for a year. Each could not leave his respective domicile. Both father and son had learned to suppress the word Simeon from their lips. The father died soon after the year was over. And Aaron began making plans to leave for America. . . .

. . . So then, Simeon was alive, he was free. And he was out of the Czar's domain. Aaron Witte paced up and down the room searching his mind for a way to communicate with his brother. The information gained from the small item in the *Gazette* was too meager to be of much assistance in this search for Simeon. He looked through the other Yiddish papers. They all contained the item about Simeon Witkowski's

escape from Siberia. Some described in detail the attempt on the life of the Czar in which Simeon figured. Mention was made of the more noted members of the group of nihilists to which Simeon belonged and who were either dead or in exile. But there was no clue as to the present whereabouts of Simeon beyond the general statement that he had arrived in Switzerland.

Witte waited until after sundown when the Sabbath came to a close and then sat down and wrote a confidential letter to the editor of the *Weekly Gazette* telling him of his predicament and asking his advice on how to communicate with his brother.

In a week a reply came. The *Gazette* editor sent him the address of the secretary of the revolutionary group in London to which Simeon belonged. The London branch of the group undoubtedly would be able to forward to Simeon any communication his brother Aaron sent it. Aaron wrote to the secretary of the group in London and enclosed a letter for his brother.

The letter, written with trembling hand, read in part:

"I have learned since I came to America much about what you nihilists want. I understand and sympathize with it. . . . I have always been with you. You were never out of my mind from the day I learned of your disappearance. In Russia the police ordered that your

name be anathema, that it be not mentioned in our house under the pain of arrest and imprisonment. . . . It was the wish to call your name, to speak about you, my brother, freely and without fear of gendarmes and police, that caused me to come to America.

"Now I am getting old. I am forty-seven. And I want to see you. I want you to come to me. I pray that you do come. Remain with us forever, if you can, or else, stay as long as you are able, as long as your work will permit. I make no exactions. I have not seen you in twenty years. One does not know how long one may live. I want to see you — I have waited to see you these many years — for in my mind I could not reconcile myself to anything but that you would come back to us. . . ."

In spots the writing was blurred by tears which Aaron could not hold back in spite of his effort to do so. In spots it was unsteady, for Aaron's hand trembled a number of times as he referred to names and scenes of a vanished past.

In three weeks there came an answer from the secretary of the London group. It was a brief, sympathetic note, which set Aaron wondering why people were saying that revolutionists had no regard for personal feelings, for relatives, for brothers. . . .

The secretary, whom Aaron did not know, whose name he had never heard before, wrote him that he

would be very happy indeed to transmit Aaron's letter to his distinguished brother, Simeon Witkowski, and would be happier still to see the brothers reunited. The letter would be forwarded to his brother in the speediest manner possible, though it would have to be in a roundabout way as Simeon's whereabouts were still kept secret for precautionary reasons. It ended with warm congratulations to Aaron Witte on his brother's successful escape from the Siberian dungeon.

There began for the Wittes an agonizing period of constant watching for the mailman. Aaron would now come from the country earlier than usual, and his first question was whether Simeon had written. But Simeon did not write. The winter went and spring came, and the Passover. The joy of the festival was marred by the silence of the brother.

May came and went, and then June. Still there was no letter from Simeon. Aaron was beginning to lose hope of ever hearing from his brother. He determined to write to the secretary of the London group once more. He would wait a few more weeks and then he would write.

Early on a Sunday morning in the last part of June, Aaron emerged from the barn where he had just completed his morning chores and was heading for the house, when he observed a middle-aged Jew of small stature and sparing dimensions coming up the street. The man's face was framed by a short, dark beard.

In his hand he carried a grip, and he walked rather laboriously, for the street ran uphill.

Aaron had known a traveling optician who had looked very much like this man. He took the stranger to be an out-of-town pedler who was going to some Jewish family he knew to spend the Sunday with them. So he went into the house.

He had scarcely, however, had time to take off his overalls, when there was a knock at the door. The man whom he had seen on the street a few moments before stepped into the room and let his satchel tumble to the floor. Between paroxysms of rapid asthmatic breathing the stranger asked for Aaron Witkowski.

"I am Aaron Witkowski — sit down, let me give you a glass of water —"

Aaron started to go after water. But the man caught his wrist and held it fast until the spell of violent breathing began to subside. Then he gasped:

"I — I'm Simeon."

CHAPTER IV

SIBERIAN ECHOES

WHEN the wave of excitement occasioned by Simeon's unexpected arrival had subsided, Aaron took his brother for a stroll in the fields. He wanted Simeon all to himself for a time, to listen and talk to him undisturbed. They spent the greater part of the afternoon — of the first afternoon — either sitting in the shade of a tree along the quiet country road, or walking slowly, in accordance with the dictates of Simeon's asthmatic lungs.

From time to time Aaron gazed at his brother with unbelieving eyes. Of course twenty years had elapsed since he had seen him, and Simeon was now a man of forty. None the less Aaron could not reconcile himself to the thought that Simeon was really a middle-aged man. He had somehow preserved him in his memory as a boy. The picture which hung on the wall in his parlor had helped fix that impression.

Simeon, in turn, had to watch himself constantly against addressing Aaron as "Father." For Aaron, except for the fact that he wore a short American coat instead of a flowing ghetto gabardine, was a picture of their father as Simeon had seen him last.

The talk, spasmodic and fragmentary, was mostly by Simeon and ran about home, their Russian home from which he was banished, and about their father. Their mother had died while Simeon was still in Russia. Avoiding Aaron's gaze Simeon kept on plying his brother with questions about their father. Who was with him when he died? And what did he say in his last hours? Was he angry with him, Simeon? Or had he forgotten him? And where was he buried — anywhere near their mother, or was there a big gap between his and her grave? Simeon showed a surprising memory with regard to the geography of the cemetery of their native town. Aaron described to him minutely the location of his father's grave.

This intensified memory of his about scenes and places in his old home astounded Aaron. Simeon asked about the playmates of his childhood, remembering the name, nickname and peculiarities of each. A thousand inconsequential things, which Aaron had long forgotten, were as fresh in his brother's mind as if they had happened only yesterday.

As Simeon spoke of these things and dwelt on half-forgotten incidents of his childhood, Aaron realized that his brother must have thought often of those scenes, places and persons in the many years of his confinement in Siberian fortresses. . . . He felt like taking the lean, almost puny, body of his younger brother in his own strong arms — In spite of his

beard Simeon appeared to him like a child in need of kindness and protection. . . .

Wild flowers were growing along the road. Simeon stretched out his hand to pluck one of them. As he did so his wrist came out from under the cuff, and Aaron perceived a dark reddish circle about it. He wondered for some moments where Simeon could have got such an ugly scar. He scanned their childhood and could not recall any such accident to his brother. Then the significance of the scar came to him with a flash. The Siberian chains the poets sang about were not mere phrases — they were real. They had eaten themselves into the flesh of his brother. Simeon would bear the marks of these chains forever. Aaron's eyes became full and hot. He lost all control over himself and began to sob. . . .

Simeon thought it was the questions about their father, which he had asked, that had so unnerved his brother. He began to mumble in broken phrases, humbly, apologetically.

It was not his lack of love or loyalty to his family that had caused him to sadden his father's old age, Simeon explained. He would have given his life to have saved his father the bitterness of his last years. . . . But he could not act otherwise. . . . It was a holy war the revolutionists were carrying on — a war for the freedom of their county, of the Russian people. The steppes of Siberia were strewn with the

bones of soldiers of freedom like himself. . . . For every lonely grave of a revolutionist in the Siberian steppes a father was mourning and a mother was crying her eyes out and wasting her life away —

Simeon became animated. Various texts from the Talmud, from Hebrew history came to his mind — a field which he had in common with his brother. He summoned these historic incidents as if to clear himself in Aaron's eyes.

"What of the Maccabees?" he asked. "Were not they the revolutionists of their day? Were not the ancient Jewish patriots hunted down by the tyrants of their age? Were they not burned, hanged, crucified for their championship of the cause of the people?

"No doubt their mothers wept their eyes out for them. . . . No doubt the fathers of these martyred saints went to their graves before their time. . . . But such is history. . . . The human race has bought every inch of freedom with the blood and sacrifice of its young sons and with the tears of its old men. . . ."

It was Aaron's turn to talk and set his brother's mind at ease. The least effort at speech, however, would have precipitated another storm of tears. He put his arm about Simeon's shoulders and they walked in silence toward the city, for the sun had already set. When the Witte home came into view Emil ran to meet them.

In the weeks that followed, Emil, who was now

nearing his seventeenth year, became the inseparable companion of his uncle. Simeon from the first discovered a strain in his nephew that pleased him.

Uncle and nephew often talked about Russia. Emil's remembrance of the "old country" was still vivid. As he spoke he would occasionally drop a phrase rich in imagery. With such a phrase as a cue Simeon would seek to pry open the boy's soul —

"What do you think you are going to make of yourself here?" Simeon once asked.

Emil had not thought of his future yet. That set him thinking.

But Simeon was not solely imparting information. He was trying to gain an idea about the United States from his nephew. He made Emil tell him of the American schools, of the aims and ideas of the pupils, and of the outlook and philosophy of their teachers. His questions were stimulating and kept Emil's mind on the alert.

What Emil and his father, in fact the entire Witte family, wanted to know most was the story of Simeon's confinement and exile in Siberia. Simeon, however, always managed to divert such questions. He spoke rarely about himself, and never about his experiences. It was only when he narrated the suffering of a friend, the agony of a comrade dying in a mine, that they got a glimpse of what he had gone through — He talked about Siberia to Emil like a teacher — imper-

sonally. He often used the Siberian fortresses he knew as a pivot about which he revolved the history of Russia. He explained to his eagerly listening nephew the significance of the revolutionary movement in that country — a movement which sent transport after transport of prisoners, made up of the best blood and brains of the country, to the remotest Asiatic dungeons.

And just as when speaking to his brother Aaron, Simeon sought to bring home to him the revolutionary movement by comparing it with events in Jewish history, by drawing illustrations from Hebrew lore, so in speaking to his nephew he chose examples and drew illustrations from ancient and American history.

Simeon's talk was a sort of running comment on history. The facts which Emil had studied in school assumed a different meaning, a new significance after they passed through the welter of Simeon's observations.

To Simeon human history appeared largely as a struggle between classes. Most concrete form this struggle assumed in Greece where the helots, or slaves, toiled and made food and clothing for their masters, while the latter occupied themselves with sport, war and learning. The conditions which prevailed then — one-half of the people in a country toiling until their backs broke, and the other half living in ease and even idleness — these conditions still prevail, he said.

The Greeks transmitted this system of exploitation to the Romans. The latter perfected the system of enslaving the poor and the weak with a series of murderous wars. The Romans, after conquering their weaker neighbors, acquiring their lands and subjugating their peoples, then proceeded to build up a system of law which made not only lawful, but fairly sacred, the possession of that which they had so unjustly acquired. That was how the institution of private property was born. . . .

In his talks with his nephew Simeon often delved into history. He gave the youth an entirely different view of the growth of royal families and monarchies than that given by his teachers. The "cunning one," the most brutal, merciless conqueror, became the king, Simeon explained. The weaker ones, those less "cunning," were made the vassals, serfs, slaves. The revolutionists of all ages and of all countries were merely trying to restore to the oppressed and disinherited masses the possessions and rights of which they had been robbed by the mighty and the cunning.

Little by little Simeon unfolded the theories of Socialism to his nephew.

"The helot of Sparta," he told Emil once, "and the factory worker of St. Petersburg, London, Paris, New York, are first cousins. There is a degree of difference in the dependence of each, but dependent they all

are. Socialism is fighting against this economic dependence.

"In Russia," Simeon continued, "the struggle of the masses is doubly complicated. In addition to their economic enslavement the masses there are held in bondage by a powerful autocracy. The nihilists in fighting Czarism are merely hoping to remove one of the strongest obstacles in the way of the greater and principal war — the war against the economic and social system which makes the bread and existence of thousands dependent upon the whim or will of one man."

As they were sitting once at the edge of the lake which skirted Spring Water, Simeon said:

"In America you don't hear much about Socialism yet, but you will before long. Yours is still a young country. Your resources are still ample and afford every one a comfortable living and a fairly secure old age, even under the iniquitous system of private property. But a time will come when the present opportunities will be limited, when the resources will be absorbed by a few. Your land will be grabbed by 'cunning men,' who instead of becoming political kings will become economic masters. They will control your industries and clip the wings of your freedom with the sword of economic supremacy.

"There is a serenity over your country at present,"

Simeon went on, " which has something healthy and soothing about it. There is a liberal spirit in your press which lifts your country above all others. But the time is coming when your masters and your workmen will draw up the battle lines against each other — Great strikes will come and your universal serenity will evaporate. You will have your ' classes ' and your ' masses ' in this country with the defenders of the one and the champions of the other. . . .

" In the twentieth century your dungeons will be filled with agitators, with champions of the masses, just as the Siberian mines and prisons were filled with Russian nihilists in the nineteenth. . . ."

Emil listened to his uncle's discourse attentively. Not all of it was quite clear to him. But Simeon had warned him that he would not understand it all — yet. These ideas would recur to him, however, he said as Emil grew older and gained in experience. They would go over into convictions that would exert a far-reaching influence over his life and his future.

It had grown dark in the meantime. From the lake a delightful breeze was blowing. Emil was looking straight ahead at the waters through which the moon had cut a silvery path. Simeon studied his face in the growing mist.

The uncle finally broke the silence.

" You will write about these things," he said, " about these very struggles between the masses and their mas-

ters. For you are going to be a writer — That, I think, is your calling in life."

Emil trembled at these words. A faintness overcame him. He felt as if he were being consecrated to a high and holy office.

Years after, when Simeon was dead and Emil was seeing life with the eyes of an aggressive American reporter in Chicago and New York, he often pondered over the words uttered by his uncle on that summer evening as they were sitting on the edge of the lake in Spring Water. As the reporter saw mounted police ride into crowds of strikers, clubbing and injuring the ragged, desperate, hungry people be recalled Simeon's prediction. . . .

And the humanity for which his uncle had gone to Siberia — the love of freedom and the welfare of the masses — served like a pillar of fire to the young reporter. It kept his heart warm and his faith in man intact. It kept him from sinking into the sloth of cynicism and indifference into which so many of his coworkers fell, and from which they sought relief in drink.

In the latter part of September Simeon announced that he would leave in a week. Aaron listened with bowed head, but no longer tried to dissuade his brother. Simeon had made it clear to Aaron soon after his arrival in Spring Water that he had no intention of settling in America. In fact there was no settling for

him anywhere. As long as autocracy held sway in Russia there was work for him to do.

Simeon's course was mapped out for him by the London branch of his revolutionary group. He was ordered to go to New York and organize a publication committee from among the Russian exiles there. This committee was to print revolutionary pamphlets in large quantities for Russia. They were to be smuggled into that country by way of Switzerland.

Aaron spent most of that last week at home and tried to be with his brother as much as possible. While both brothers avoided speaking about it, each felt that this was the last they would see of each other. Emil divined the thoughts of his father and Simeon. Much as he wanted to be near his uncle in these last days, he withdrew discreetly every time he found his father and uncle alone.

The evening before his departure Simeon called Emil into his room. He fumbled in his valise and produced several German books and pamphlets, among them the *Communist Manifesto,* and gave them to his nephew.

"Your German is still weak," Simeon said, "and you will not be able to read and understand these fully for some time. But keep them. You will find them very enlightening when you get older."

After a prolonged debate with himself Aaron finally asked Simeon a question which opened up the subject

that both had painfully avoided. If he did not hear from Simeon for a long time, Aaron wanted to know, where could he write to inquire about him? Was there an address Simeon could leave him?

There was no address he could give him, Simeon said. He did not know where he would go from New York. The life of a revolutionist was exceedingly uncertain. Aaron might subscribe, however, for *Free Leaves,* the organ of the revolutionist party of Russia published in London. The *Free Leaves* sometimes made personal mention of revolutionists. At any rate it always gave — death notices.

Aaron tugged his mustache and did not speak for some time.

From the *Free Leaves* Aaron learned several months later that his brother had arrived in London.

A year later Aaron Witte was sitting one Saturday afternoon reading the papers that had accumulated during the week. He missed his *Free Leaves* and was about to ask Masha what she had done with it — for Masha was now reading the revolutionary journal as eagerly as her husband — when he came upon a copy of the paper from which the wrapper had not yet been torn. He broke the cover of the little magazine, unfolded it. On the front page, set in a black border, was the picture of his brother. . . .

Inside there was an article occupying several pages and telling the story of his brother's life in Russia and

in Siberia — the tragic story Aaron was craving to know, but about which Simeon had been silent. Simeon had died in Paris after a brief illness.

With the death of Simeon the last link between the Witte family and the old world was broken. The old world had grown strangely distant — America was absorbing the attention of Emil and Aaron. And even Masha thought of Russia less and less. . . . If she longed to be "among Jews," as she often did, her longing was confined to the Jewish centers of the larger American cities and not of the old world.

CHAPTER V

CLARA MARRIES

IT was the last day of the Passover — the eighth Passover the Witte family had observed in the new world. Aaron and Masha were sitting by the open window in the parlor, looking out into the street which swarmed with children — all children of Jewish immigrants. There were now between forty and fifty Jewish families in Spring Water, and the majority of them lived in Front Street.

It was a beautiful mid-April afternoon. A restless breeze was blowing through the open window. Such a breeze always stirred Mrs. Witte's heart. A tender melancholy crept into it. . . . There were streaks of gray about her temples now. The eight years in America had greatly aged her. It was not material want that caused her to fall into frequent moods of moroseness. Aaron made a fairly comfortable living. It was spiritual bareness. She missed the Jewish atmosphere of the old world. She missed the synagogue of her home town; she missed the rabbi, the cantor and the holidays. . . . Everything here appeared to her merely as make-believe. What did the Sabbath mean when half of her own family desecrated it by working

that day? What pleasure could there be in a holiday when Harry, her eldest born, could not leave the store — he now owned a clothing store in a town fifteen miles from Spring Water — to be with them, and Emil was in school all day.

The religious life of the little immigrant community seemed to her a makeshift at best. And to a large extent her view was justified. A hall, which served as a gathering place for union laborers, was turned into a house of prayer every holiday. Just as the place was an imitation of a synagogue, so the services held in it were imitations of real services, the kind she was accustomed to in the old world. The prayers were cut. Things were hurried — She knew that most of the men would leave the makeshift house of prayer to go back to their stores and shops to attend to business.

Aaron felt these things as keenly as his wife, but avoided speaking about them. What was the use? Every time Masha brought up the subject he had a mitigating word for every pharisaical act. It was not the fault of the people altogether. Necessity, the need of earning a livelihood, was back of the lack of piety and reverence for things that are holy.

Like her husband Masha realized their utter impotency to change things. The new world would have its way. It was silly to fight. It was not cowardice to submit here. She realized all that. Yet while Aaron adopted a philosophic and resigned attitude,

she often wept in silence over their helplessness.

A trivial incident which occurred at this time exercised a profound and depressive influence upon Mrs. Witte and left a scar that would never quite heal. She and her husband were out for a stroll one Sabbath afternoon when suddenly she perceived that they were being followed by a crowd of small boys, who were jeering and shouting after them. One of the youngsters picked up a stone and threw it at her husband. Aaron dodged the stone and started off at a faster pace, Masha clinging to his arm. As they increased their pace the youngsters ran after them. In front of a saloon a young man with two rows of yellow teeth, and a chin bespattered with tobacco juice, shook his fist at them and shouted into Aaron's face: "Sheeny!" Whereupon there arose a chorus of laughter and guffaws from a dozen drunken men outside the saloon.

When they finally extricated themselves from the annoying crowd, Aaron without looking Masha in the face began in his usual manner to mitigate things. Children grow up wild in the new world — have no respect for older persons. They are not really bad at heart, just badly raised, indifferently brought up —

Masha was blinded with tears of rage. If she could only speak the language of those people! She would tell them who the man they were casting stones at, who her husband was! She would tell them that

Aaron could match in scholarship the highest men of their town, that he would have been a rabbi had not he put her, Masha, above a career. But she could not speak the language of these people and gritted her teeth in silence. . . .

Some time after this incident several people in the neighborhood sought to make friends with Mrs. Witte. One of these women spoke German, and Masha was glad to see her and talk to her. The woman invited her to join a neighborhood club. But Masha declined. The insult to her husband by the children of the neighborhood was rankling in her heart. Several times she received invitations to come to socials held in the little church a few blocks from her home, but she could not bring herself to accept them. They were not for her.

She felt that the kindness of her neighbors was somehow a surface kindness only. Beneath the surface they were strangers to each other. They worshiped differently. She and her family were Jews. They were Christians. The things she worshiped were meaningless to her American neighbors.

For a long time Masha and her husband sat silently looking out of the open window. A sigh which escaped Masha's breast awakened Aaron from his reveries. Masha's eyes were resting on him with a solicitous, liquid gaze.

"You are worrying again," Aaron said, reproaching her mildly.

"It is you who is worrying most," Masha replied. "You have not been looking well since Simeon left — It cannot be helped. We too shall die — We are growing old —

When they looked up after a lapse of silence their eyes met in complete understanding. They were thinking the same thoughts.

"He is not what I intended for Clara," Aaron began. "He is not the sort of a man I want for my son-in-law. I had hoped that Clara would marry a man who was somewhat of a scholar, who knew a little of the Talmud — with whom I could talk, discuss things occasionally —"

In the next moment, however, Aaron was again qualifying his own words:

"Of course, Alex is far from being a bad match for Clara. He is a business man. The Rosens know his family in Chicago — fine respectable people — business men. A brother of his owns a big store in Omaha. Alex, too, will not clerk long at the Emporium. He will go in business for himself. Clara will not want anything —"

Alex Stein, the subject of their talk, was a young man of twenty-five. His parents came to Chicago from Russia when he was a child. He received a pub-

lic school education and from his fourteenth year tossed about from job to job and from city to city. The Emporium department store of Spring Water brought a new manager from Chicago. The manager, Mr. Sidney Siegel, was a friend of the Stein family, and Alex drifted into Spring Water to pay him a visit. The manager just then needed a shoe salesman that was more energetic than the easy-going Mr. Scott, who had been holding the job for years, and he offered young Stein the place at a much larger salary.

"But I know nothing about the shoe business," Alex had protested.

"Nonsense," said the manager, "you know how to sell — that is all that is necessary."

Alex met Clara at the Emporium. The glove counter where she worked was around the corner from the shoe department. He fell in love with her.

Alex Stein was correctness personified, and to the superficial observer was everything one could desire in a young man. He dressed with scrupulous up-to-dateness, was rich in socks and neckties. His hair was parted in the center and stayed parted as if it had been glued to the scalp. He perused religiously the sporting page of a Chicago evening paper he especially subscribed for, and claimed the personal acquaintance of two or three prize fighters, who were much in the limelight then.

The average immigrant in Spring Water looked upon

Alex Stein with great respect, for to this immigrant Alex stood for the typical American boy — a privileged child of free institutions and democracy. Alex furthered this reputation by addressing every one in English, no matter whether the person addressed understood him or not. When an answer in Yiddish was necessary he replied in mutilated phrases, more by design than through his actual inability to speak the language. In his circle it was considered a sign of good breeding to have got away from the ancestral language no less than from the customs.

Aaron Witte a number of times tried to draw Alex, who was now a frequent caller at the Witte home, into a conversation on matters that were removed from business, on some of the broader questions of the day, the social and humanitarian movements that were discussed in the press, especially in the foreign press, which Witte followed closely. Here Alex, in spite of his being an "American boy," was absolutely helpless before the man who was to be his father-in-law. Upon leaving the house after such a conversation in which Aaron Witte, of course, took the lead, Alex Stein invariably berated Witte to himself and dismissed him with a feeling of disgust, dubbing him a "greenhorn." Alex knew no greater expression of contempt than that.

Once Witte sounded him on Jewish history. Alex looked bewildered. He knew nothing of the questions

and problems that interested the thinkers and the leaders of the race. His views on religion were a mixture of ignorance and cynicism.

Aaron saw that there would be no mental kinship between himself and Alex. Nevertheless he was too good a young man to turn down. Besides this was not Europe. Here fathers were not choosing husbands for their daughters. Clara had the sole say. And it was an easy matter for this young man, who had been through every large city in the United States, to fascinate the girl whose knowledge of America did not extend beyond Spring Water.

That very evening after Masha's and Aaron's talk Clara confided to her mother that Alex Stein had proposed to her.

"And he wants me to be a June bride," she added, the blood mounting to her face.

Clara was a June bride, but it was in the last part of June that she was married. This date was chosen in deference to Emil, who was to graduate from high school on the nineteenth of the month. To Aaron Witte the graduation of his son seemed fully as important an event as the marriage of his daughter. Witte loved his only daughter dearly, but the joy of the occasion was secretly blighted for him by what he in his heart designated as a coarse, loaferish streak in Alex Stein's nature.

When his wife showed him a new dress which the

tailor had just brought for Clara, Aaron sincerely tried to be interested. He tried to rejoice over the coming wedding of his daughter. But his heart did not respond. His mind would most often wander in these days to the attic where Emil was seated among his books, preparing for the examination.

Emil, now a youth of eighteen, was pale and haggard. His thin frame seemed to be weighted down with worries. The work did not come hard to him. But it so happened that his lessons, instead of being first with him, were last. They were a sort of by-product in his mental scheme. He was more interested in the books which he drew from the library and which he devoured at a high rate of speed.

The books he was reading were what the teacher would call out of his line. He read fiction, history, philosophy. Turgenev reconstructed Russia to him, the Russia which was beginning to fade from his memory. Carlyle possessed himself of his imagination with the grandeur and horrors of the French revolution, while Buckle was making clear to him many of the things which his Uncle Simeon spoke about.

Alex Stein had barely found his place in the Witte household when he began taking a meddlesome part in its affairs. He sought to impose his wishes upon every member of the family, to direct the course of every one and everything. For the time being he singled out

Emil. It began over the question of the course Emil was to take up at the University.

It was a settled thing in the Witte household that Emil would go to the University. For Aaron Witte this was settled two years before when his brother Simeon was still with him.

"Emil," his younger brother once said to Aaron, "is quiet. But his quietness is only another expression for character. He has a will and ability."

Aaron was fully awake to the qualities of his son. But it did his heart good to hear these words from Simeon's lips.

"Boys, men of the type and character of Emil," Simeon went on, "are frequently misunderstood, misjudged. Most people can only see power when it is manifested in a strong arm, athletic physique, or daring feats. But there is another sort of power in the world, a more fruitful power frequently — the power which resists passively and endures patiently. Emil has that power."

As to what course he would take neither Emil nor his father had given a thought. It was Alex Stein who broached the subject in a conversation a week after he was married.

Emil looked up as if he were awakened from a strange world. He had known that there were different courses at the University. He had looked through the catalogue of the institution carefully. The per-

sonal side of the institution appeared to him, however, only through the medium of Mr. Sanborn, his Latin teacher.

Sanborn was hated most cordially by the students of the first and second year Latin classes. But he appeared more human in Cicero. As for Virgil, the Roman poet positively mellowed the Latin teacher. Emil in his senior year had often wondered over the remarkable change that would come over the dried-up, lanky Mr. Sanborn in the Virgil class. The teacher here deliberately winked at grammar. He was indifferent to syntax and just read the Latin poet and enjoyed him and made the pupils enjoy him.

He interspersed his readings of Virgil to the class with remarks and anecdotes about the University, about his old professor. Sometimes he would describe the professor to his class — the old bear, he called him, but how he knew his Latin!

Sanborn occasionally even took the class into his confidence. He was planning to return to the University soon, to take up more work under this old bear of a professor, who was the best teacher of the subject in the country. He was planning to go up for his doctor's degree in another year or two.

So it came about that Emil's picture of the University was confined largely to a genial professor who was interpreting Horace and Ovid to his classes with remarkable picturesqueness. In his mind he often saw

himself sitting at the feet of this man, drinking in the ancient poets of whom he was fond.

When Alex pressed Emil for a definite answer as to what course he was going to take, he replied:

"The classical course."

Alex looked puzzled.

"Will that make you a doctor?" he asked.

"No," said Emil curtly. He did not like his brother-in-law overmuch.

"Well, then you will be a lawyer?" Alex persisted. Emil replied that the classical course did not lead to law.

"What does it lead to?" Alex wanted to know.

Emil pondered some moments as if weighing in his mind whether to answer his brother-in-law or not. He finally said:

"It leads to teaching, for one thing. Then there are other things —"

What these "other things" were that the classical course led to Emil himself had but a vague idea.

Alex Stein was insistent that Emil take up law. He knew a Jewish lawyer in Chicago, he said, who was one of the leading men in that city. That was the sort of a man he would like to see Emil become.

This solicitude for Emil's career on the part of his brother-in-law was not a matter of pure disinterestedness. Just as Alex knew a Jew who was a big lawyer and an influential citizen in Chicago, he knew also a

number of Jews who exerted considerable influence in the city hall. When any one in the ghetto was in trouble these men used their influence with the judge, or alderman, or somebody in authority. This frequently resulted in a man's being saved from a sentence in jail or in the gaining of a desired concession.

It was Alex Stein's ambition to become just such an influential Jew in Spring Water, to be an important person about the city hall and in the city's affairs. One or two aldermen already knew him and called him by his first name. . . . That was a good beginning. Now if Emil only took up law! With a brother-in-law a lawyer he could climb much faster than he could single-handed. . . .

Emil was not aware of these designs of his brother-in-law. He looked upon the constant harangues of Alex Stein as a nuisance. Aaron, too, took a hand in the matter. He did not see that teaching was not as honorable a profession as law or medicine. If Emil wished to be a teacher, if he was inclined that way, why should any one interfere with his inclinations?

Stein gave up trying to win his brother-in-law over to the legal profession. His dislike for Emil, which he conceived the first day they met, now turned into hatred. But he was too much of a diplomat to show it. He took his first serious defeat in the Witte household gracefully, but mentally charged it up to them as a thing to get even for some day in the future.

Aaron went with Emil to the university town. He could not afford to let him stay at any of the student dormitories. So he took him to the house of a countryman, who was a pedler like himself, and there arranged for Emil's room and board at a much cheaper rate than it could be secured at a students' boarding-house.

CHAPTER VI

COLLEGE DAYS

AMONG the requirements of the course in "Sophomore English" was a long theme to be handed in by the middle of the semester. The professor spoke about the character of the theme cursorily on the first class day. He came to it again a month later, when he urged the class to start working on it immediately as there were only five weeks left to do it in.

The theme was not to be argumentative in nature. Nor should it be critical, or an exposition of historical facts, the professor advised. The ideal theme, he explained, would be a story, for fiction allows room for both narration and description — the two hardest as well as the most fundamental elements in good writing. For weeks the students talked among themselves about the theme, wondering, guessing what would and what would not be a good subject. Some consulted friends among the upper classmen to get their experience in the matter.

Emil consulted no one, spoke to no one. He was not a popular man among his classmates. About the campus few knew him by sight, fewer to talk to. He

did not keep aloof from the students, but he kept away. There were good reasons for this. The family of the pedler with whom he boarded lived in the poorest district of the city, near the railroads. There was a pedler's cart in the rear of every house. Scrap iron and bottles lay piled in every yard. There were men with beards and women in wigs walking up and down the street, talking excitedly in Yiddish, gesticulating.

He was not ashamed of these surroundings. He was not in the least annoyed by them. Behind the pedler's cart, he knew, there was often a man with ideals and a high education. Many of his countrymen took to the pedler's cart, to the junk wagon, because it most often was the only thing they could turn to. They were in a strange land of whose language and customs they were ignorant. Centuries of restriction and oppression in the ghettos of the old world had weakened them to an extent that made it impossible for many of them to take to the pick and shovel.

Emil knew, however, that these things, while fully understood by him, would not be understood, at least not readily, by an outsider. To mingle with the student body, to go up to a student's room, meant inviting him in turn to his own room. If he invited a student friend to his room in the little ghetto, there would be too many explanations to make, he feared. The student might have a laugh at Emil's surroundings, and then transfer the laugh to Emil himself. He

had seen such things happen. So he avoided the likelihood of having to invite friends by not accepting invitations from them, by keeping away from the social life of the university.

As was the case with all of Emil's work, he postponed the theme until the last week. Meantime hardly a recitation passed without one or more students asking the professor whether this or that would be an acceptable subject. Emil listened to these discussions.

The Sunday of the week when the theme was to be handed in he rose early and by noon had written the required twenty-five hundred word story. He copied it on an afternoon when his work for the next day was light and deposited it on the professor's desk as he left the classroom.

The professor kept these themes for three weeks, in spite of the impatience of the students. He had about one hundred and fifty of such themes to read, correct and criticize. Finally he announced one morning that the entire recitation hour would be devoted to a discussion of the compositions. For this purpose he had chosen several papers to read from.

He picked out parts of five or six themes and read them, some for their merit, others because they were decidedly bad. He went over these quotations, criticizing, praising, suggesting where and how such and such a passage could be improved.

One paper he was going to read in its entirety, the

professor said, because of its unusual merit. The theme gave evidence of a literary gift. It was — he hesitated a moment — this theme was in itself a piece of literature.

As he spoke the professor looked away impersonally at the wall as if not wishing to let his gaze betray the writer of the theme to the shifting eyes of the class. Amid deep silence he began reading.

The first few words of the theme were familiar to Emil Witte. It seemed to him that he had heard them somewhere before. He leaned forward in his chair to hear better and in the next instant he realized that it was his own theme that was being read. He became hot all over. Covering his eyes with his hand he remained motionless in his seat throughout the reading of the paper.

After the themes had been distributed and the class was filing out, several students stopped to talk to the professor. Witte made his way toward the door. The professor asked him to remain a few moments.

When the last student had been dismissed, the professor walked down the hall with Witte to his own office, complimenting him once more on his theme. He wound up his compliments with an invitation to call on him at his house. In order to make sure of Witte's calling, the professor set the date himself. This was tantamount to an order for Emil to come. . . .

Emil went straight to the library, sought out an empty table, piled several large books in front of him so as to hide the right to left movements of his pen, and sat down to write to his father in Yiddish — the Yiddish he had learned in the Russian ghetto before coming to America. It was a nervous, exalted letter. . . . When Aaron read it to his wife, tears came into Masha's eyes. Aaron's voice, too, faltered, and he had to stop several times to clear his throat. Father and mother were intensely happy and intensely proud of their son in whom big men, professors, took such an interest.

A year passed.

Easter and Passover fell in the same week. Emil came home for the holidays. Harry, the eldest son, now married and the father of a child, was there with his family for the festival. Clara came with her husband and their two children. Alex Stein had not forgiven Emil what he considered the latter's stubbornness in not taking up law. But he tactfully forgot his grudge for the evening.

Aaron, whose beard was now gray, solemnized Passover with impressive ceremony. As he was reciting the story of the delivery of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage in the quaint medieval sing-song, Emil went back in his mind sixteen years, when as a child of five he sat with Harry and Clara about a table similarly spread in their thatched cot-

tage in Russia. What a change those years had brought!

Then his father's beard was black, his features firm. There were none of the deep lines that furrowed Aaron's face now. His voice, as he recited the story of Israel's escape from slavery, sounded different then. It was stronger, more triumphant. There was not the occasional lisp that now tore itself from Aaron's lips. Emil noted — and this sent a pang through his heart — that since he had last seen his father, the latter had lost a lower front tooth. . . . Aaron was aging, unmistakably.

When Aaron finished reciting the story of Israel's freedom and took off the white, shroud-like garment which he wore all through the ceremony, the atmosphere changed to one of merriment. They ate, and drank wine, the four prescribed glasses that are to be drunk on the occasion, and the hearts of all became light. Masha looked from one to the other of her children, busied herself about her three grandchildren, and her cup of happiness was full —

When Emil found himself alone in his room, however, he could not fall asleep. The missing front tooth which so greatly altered his father's voice, fastened itself in his brain. He could not shake it out of his thoughts. Age was overtaking his father and mother. And the natural corollary of age was death — There was no getting away from both of

these — He began figuring the age of his parents. Both Aaron and Masha were past fifty. At sixty one was really old — He pulled the blanket over his head, closed his eyes and tried not to think —

In the morning Emil took a stroll through the streets of Spring Water. The town was just awakening from its winter's sleep. The sparse grass on the lawns had an embarrassed look as if it were not at all certain that it had not come out a trifle too early. The lake, which skirted the town, always had a fascination for Emil. He could sit at the edge of the water for hours and listen to the beating of the waves. Unconsciously he walked in the direction of the water.

Alongside the lake lay the residential part of Spring Water. The streets were wide, the houses large, roomy, and far apart. Every home here had a wide lawn, big verandas and an air of security and well-being.

As Emil passed one of these spacious homes he heard some one call his name. A woman was running down the steps of one of these houses. She was running toward him. He recognized Lena Rosen.

As if through a mist he recalled some one's telling of the Rosen boys' opening recently a new store in Spring Water and of the Rosen family's moving into the exclusive part of the city.

"I hardly recognized you at first," said Emil, confused. Though he had seen Lena many times before,

his recollection of her now was that of a little girl who talked to him on the first day of his arrival, and who later took him to school and introduced him to the kindly, smiling woman teacher. He compared the picture of the child with the black curls with the young lady who stood beaming at him, and it seemed to him as if Lena's long dresses and womanly manners were only a pose and that soon she would reappear again in her real self, the little girl with curls, asking him whether he could add and subtract.

He followed her into the house. Mrs. Rosen, who had been gaining in corpulency out of all proportion since Emil last saw her, began hopping about him, repeating excitedly all the while: "Ah, what a guest, what a guest!"

"Abe," Mrs. Rosen, protruding her head through the heavy Persian portières, addressed her husband, "guess who is here, Abe?"

Mr. Rosen did not guess, but walked right into the parlor and was face to face with young Witte, who was still standing in the middle of the room. He caught Emil's hand and shook it heartily. He looked him over in a fatherly manner, tapped him on the shoulder as if to signify that everything was all right, and puffing heavily — for Mr. Rosen, too, was growing stout — started to pull a Morris chair toward his guest.

When Emil was seated Rosen began to entertain

him in his own fashion, which consisted of questioning the youth minutely.

Was Emil going to be a doctor? No? Well, then, Mr. Rosen supposed that he would be a lawyer. But when this supposition also proved wrong, Mr. Rosen's curiosity was aroused in earnest. If not medicine or law, what could one go to the University for — what else was there?

Emil began feeling uncomfortable under this rapid fire of questions which followed his monosyllabic answers. Lena noticed this and was attempting to explain to her father that there were other branches of knowledge taught at a university besides medicine and the law, when Mrs. Rosen entered the room, a carafe in one hand and a well-stocked plate in the other. This ended the discussion.

As Emil was leaving, after having promised Mrs. Rosen that he would not "act like a stranger," and would come to visit them often during the holidays, Lena slipped on her coat and went out with him.

They walked toward the lake. Now Lena was showering questions upon Emil. But her questions were so different. Emil not only answered them, but he soon found himself talking to her as he had never spoken to a stranger before. . . . It even seemed to him that Lena was no stranger, but was something like a sister of his, somebody very near to him. . . . Why should not he feel so toward her? She was the

one who had unlocked the gates of the new world to him. She had led him to school for the first time.

He recalled that episode of their childhood. Lena laughed.

"And now," Emil said, and the words seemed to linger in his throat, "now you are a big girl — a young lady."

He stopped and looked at her in admiration. A light flush came into Lena's cheeks.

"What about yourself?" she retorted laughingly. "You, too, are a big boy — a man now. . . . I suppose you are in love already," she added after a moment, with a roguish twinkle in her eye.

Emil turned his face from her. A weak smile played about his lips. He wanted to say something equally clever and daring, but could find no words. . . . They reached the lake. He picked up a handful of pebbles and was throwing them in the water. As he did this the ungainliness of his frame, his physical shortcomings came into view. The Russian Pale had put her stamp upon his physique. She had marked him as her own.

Emil was slightly below medium height. His shoulders were a trifle stooped, his chest caved in. It was quite evident that he paid little attention to physical training and was a total stranger to athletics.

Lena quickly shifted her gaze from his body to his face and head. Vaguely she felt that it was by his

face and head that Emil would be judged. It was his face, and especially his head that made him attractive.

She began talking about his work, asking what his plans were on graduation. He would be a senior in the fall.

A deep earnestness settled over Emil's face. He was debating with himself whether to answer her question, whether to initiate the girl into his cherished ambitions. Lena, however, was looking at him so expectantly, patiently and so full of faith, that he did not see what harm there could be in telling her his plans.

"I intend to teach," he said simply, "and then write — on the side. Many men have done this."

"You intend to be a writer?" Lena said, forgetting about his teaching. She had not the slightest intimation before that this was Emil's ambition. But the way he looked as he spoke of writing convinced her that that was exactly what Emil should do.

"Yes," he said, gazing far out on the water.

"Have you written things already?"

"Hardly anything."

"Poetry? Have you written any verses?" she persisted.

"Only a few."

The atmosphere which was mild a few minutes before suddenly became brisk. The tips of Lena's gloveless fingers began to numb. She started away

from the lake. When they reached the corner where she was to turn off to the house, she shook hands with Emil, exacting a promise from him that he would come to see them the next day. Her brothers would surely like to see him. And she was anxious to talk to him about the University — she would like to go to the University herself. She was to graduate from high school in June. Emil called at the Rosen home the next day and the evening before he left.

When he was back again at the University Emil sent Lena a postal card giving a view of some of the college buildings. He received in reply a long letter, written on scented paper. He did not know how to answer it and postponed writing to her from day to day. Then the examinations were nearing and he had little time to write — at least that was what he told himself every time he thought of the unanswered letter.

About two weeks before the close of the semester another letter came. Lena attributed his not answering her note to his preparing for the examinations. She knew what that meant. Then she mentioned seeing him as soon as he came home for his vacation. She was anxious to see him, she wrote. There were so many things she wanted to talk over with him. She hoped that they would see much of each other during the summer and talk over everything — everything, for Emil knew so much, and understood every-

thing so much better than the people in Spring Water, the people around her —

Emil spent an uneasy night after reading the letter. It crowded all else out of his mind and Lena stood before his eyes. In fact there were hovering before him two Lenas: one a girl of eight with black curls, who spoke in broken Yiddish and led him, a green ghetto boy, to school; the other, a young lady who wrote on scented paper — who waited for him to come, to talk to him, to confide in him. . . .

He lay awake for hours thinking of the girl, recalling her voice, eyes, hair. . . . He would write to her in the morning — the first thing.

Sleep finally overcame him, but Lena remained with him in his dreams. . . .

When Emil stepped off the train in Spring Water, full of eager anticipations for his vacation, he was met by his father who looked blanched and greatly worried.

In a few words Aaron apprised him that Harry had been stricken with typhoid for more than a week. He had kept it from Emil, his father explained, because he did not wish to worry him during the examinations.

The next morning Emil took the train for the little town where Harry lived and there stepped into his sick brother's place in the store. By the time Harry

recovered sufficiently to be able to tend to business once more, the vacation season was over. Emil had barely time to snatch three days' rest and went back to the University. He saw nothing of Lena that summer.

CHAPTER VII

A REPORTER

MR. RAND, the city editor of the N—— *Express,* ran his eyes over the letter of introduction handed him by Emil Witte and put it to one side with an air of extreme weariness. Emil, watching the city editor's every move, concluded that he must be at least the tenth man who had come to ask for a job that morning, each of whom had presented just such a letter of introduction as his, and that these letters and their bearers were the bane of Rand's existence.

As a matter of fact a reporter had left the *Express* the preceding week. The vacancy had not been filled, and Rand was glad to see a man drift in and ask for a job.

Still maintaining his air of boredom, however, the city editor said:

"There is no opening on the staff right now —"

The ringing of the telephone interrupted him. When Rand had hung up the receiver, he again turned to Emil Witte with a seemingly absent, but in reality searching gaze. He picked up the letter of introduc-

tion once more — it was from an influential lawyer who had taken an interest in young Witte — and read it clear through.

"You speak several languages?" Rand asked.

Emil nodded affirmatively.

"As I said," continued the editor, "there is no opening on the staff right now. However, this is a metropolitan city, and a man who speaks a number of languages ought to be useful. Come in again next Thursday. Perhaps something will turn up in the meantime."

Nothing had turned up by Thursday, but Witte was told to come in again at one o'clock the following day. He came and Rand motioned to him to sit down near one of the desks. With this Rand apparently forgot him. At five o'clock the city editor crooked his finger at Witte and the latter came up to his desk at a run.

"Go out and talk with the woman," Rand said, handing him a clipping from an evening paper.

Witte wrote the interview and laid the copy on the city editor's desk. He was again forgotten until nearly midnight. Then Rand in passing told him to go home, adding, "One o'clock to-morrow."

Emil Witte had secured his first job.

Every beginner on the *Express* was started in with the "labor run." N—— was a city of a quarter of a million people. It was one of the growing manufacturing centers in the Middle West. There were

about two score labor unions in the city. The news of these unions was printed every morning on the tenth or eleventh page of the *Express* under the heading "In the Labor World."

The following Monday Rand gave Witte a slip of paper with half a dozen addresses of the principal unions and briefly explained what was expected of him on the labor run.

"You will pick up the names of the other unions as you go along," Rand said. "To-day be sure to look up the iron molders. Talk to their business agent, Weber. The molders have been threatening to strike. See what you can get on it."

On the way to the headquarters of the molders, Emil studied the third of a column of labor news in the *Express*. Much of it sounded strange. The phrases, "closed shop," "open shop," "boycott," "lockout" were new to him.

"What became of Cochrane, was he fired?" Weber asked when Witte introduced himself as the new reporter from the *Express*.

Witte did not know Cochrane, did not know who his predecessor was. The good-natured, bantering way in which Weber asked the question reassured him. The agent seemed to be a good sort of fellow. He was kind and genial at any rate. So Witte threw himself at the mercy of the business agent. He told him that he was just beginning his career as a reporter,

that he had been on the *Express* only three days and in the city of N—— only a week. He would appreciate it, therefore, if Mr. Weber, would give him all the news there was. He would be especially grateful if the business agent would give him the news as plainly as possible so that he could write it down correctly for the paper.

Weber listened to the frank statement of the embryo reporter.

"You want to write labor news correctly?" the business agent said with a wry smile. "All right, my boy, go ahead, try. The Lord help you. You will need His help if you are to get union news into the *Express* correctly. But I am afraid even the Lord cannot protect you from your city editor's blue pencil."

While Witte was pondering over Weber's words, the business agent was studying the reporter curiously. Witte was so different from his predecessor. He was simple and unsophisticated in the city ways.

"Is your father a workman?" the labor man asked.

Witte nodded, and he felt the blood come into his face. Suppose the business agent asked his father's trade? But Weber did not ask.

Weber supplied the reporter with the names of a number of unions whose headquarters were in the neighborhood and advised him what men were worth while seeing in each of these unions. As for the

molders, there was no news that day, he said. As Witte was about to leave, Weber added as an afterthought:

"You might say that the molders are firm in their demands, and if the negotiations now pending with the employers come to no satisfactory conclusion, nothing can avert a strike."

Witte wrote down the statement word for word.

Weber watched the reporter not unkindly. To an experienced newspaper man he would not have said that much. He would have taken for granted that the reporter would have gathered the attitude of the molders' union indirectly. Witte's frank admission of his inexperience had moved him to this indulgence.

When Witte read off to the city editor the brief statement of the business agent, Rand grunted. Witte could not make out whether it meant approval or disapproval.

"Roscoe!" Rand called across the room. A reporter at the farther end laid aside the afternoon paper he was reading and strode up to the city editor's desk.

"Witte, here, got a statement from Weber of the molders," Rand said. "He says there will be a strike unless the present negotiations end favorably for the union. It is the first authentic statement we have had from Weber. Witte will give you the exact wording. Give me about two-thirds of a column on it. It is a first page story."

Addressing Witte, the city editor told him to write out the other items he had picked up during the afternoon.

"Give them about half a dozen lines each," he added, when Emil was seated at his desk.

The "Labor World" corner, occupying frequently less than a third of a column, immediately came to be the most interesting part of the paper to Witte — it was the part he had written.

Included in the labor run was the Socialist party headquarters.

When Witte introduced himself to a rotund, smiling German, who was the secretary of the party and from whom all news concerning the Socialists of N—— emanated, the latter extended his hand to him with profuse cordiality.

"So you are from the *Express,*" the secretary — Gus Miller was his name — said. "And what became of the other fellow, Cochrane? Was he fired, or did he get married?"

Miller and his colleague at the next desk laughed volubly at this joke about Cochrane. As Witte seemed to remain somewhat unappreciative of it, Miller explained that the *Express* had changed at least half a dozen labor reporters within as many months.

"Most of the fellows were no good," Miller said. "One good reporter they had got married and went

into the State to become the editor of a country newspaper."

When Witte called the next day he found Miller in an argumentative mood. The secretary launched out on the iniquity of the present system and what fools these mortals were for not seeing it and for having to be coaxed into the Socialist fold.

The German's eyes twinkled good-humoredly at the young reporter.

"We have been fairly successful with some of the reporters in the past," Miller said. "Many of the newspaper men in town are Socialists. We have converted them. And now for you, my boy, we shall have to start in making a Socialist of you."

Witte could not make out whether Miller was speaking in jest or in earnest. The secretary continued in the same vein.

"Hoffman," he said, addressing his companion at the neighboring desk, "I commission you with the job of converting this young man. Show your skill as an agitator now."

"It will be no easy task, I dare say," Hoffman replied. "This young man must be fresh from the University, where they drill them carefully into the belief that private property is sacred. However, we shall try."

Hoffman, smiling, searched the reporter's eyes as if in confirmation of his diagnosis.

"You might spare yourself the trouble of trying to convert me," Witte said simply. "I *am* a Socialist."

Miller and Hoffman at once dropped their bantering tone and became alive with interest in the boy before them. The secretary began plying him with questions. What local did he belong to? Oh, he did not belong to the party. Why not? Was there no Socialist branch in his town? He saw that Witte was not a native of N——.

So far as Witte knew there was no Socialist party branch in Spring Water. Miller fished out a card catalogue from one of the drawers in his desk and looked it through. Witte was right; there was no branch in Spring Water. He began talking excitedly to Hoffman. They were not doing things right. They should have another organizer in the State. It was a rank shame. Here was a city like Spring Water, a city of fifteen thousand people, and no Socialist branch in it. He would take the matter up at the next meeting of the state executive board. They must have another organizer in the field forthwith!

"Are there any other Socialists in Spring Water?" Miller wanted to know. Witte could not enlighten him.

"How did you happen to become a Socialist?" the secretary asked.

"An uncle of mine," Witte spoke slowly, "an uncle from Russia, was visiting us — he left me some books and pamphlets."

Miller was talking excitedly once more, this time about Russia. Ah, that was a country for you! What splendid work the revolutionists were doing there. What heroic self-sacrifice! Next to Germany, Russia would soon have the strongest Socialist movement in the world. All this while in the United States the Socialist movement was lagging behind. Yes, lagging behind, in spite of the fact that every one could read here. . . . They must put another organizer in the State at once. A city like Spring Water without a Socialist branch! Such splendid material as this young man having to wait for an uncle from Russia to bring him Socialist books and pamphlets. It was a shame, a rank shame! He would take it up at the next meeting of the executive board; they must economize elsewhere. But they must put another organizer in the field —

When Witte had written out his Socialist items — there was almost double the usual number of items that afternoon — Rand said to him as he was running his pencil over a line in the copy:

"The old windbag was talkative to-day."

Witte guessed that he meant Miller, the secretary of the Socialist party.

"It is all right though," Rand added. "Always pick up as many of these little items as you can — Go to dinner."

Witte laid aside the magazine and walked up to the window. It was a sultry August afternoon and the heat in the attic room he occupied was insufferable. But the heat made him far less uncomfortable than the story he had just finished. . . .

It was a fine story, the kind he would himself like to have written. He wondered what sort of man the author was. A man who could write a story with so much feeling in it, with so much tenderness, could not be happy. Yet the successful putting of such a story on paper in itself ought to be sufficient to bring happiness to any man. He gazed at his own half column of cut and dried notices in the *Express*. What a vast expanse of life and experience lay between his half column of labor items and the story he had just read! Would he traverse that distance? And if not, what was he doing there? Was he undergoing this struggle merely for a fate like Jim Bayley's?

In the three months Emil had been on the staff of the *Express* he had learned much about newspaper life, although he never took part in the conversation of the older reporters — merely listened. The fame and glory of the business was on the wane, he heard constantly repeated. It was becoming less and less

of a profession. Chances for getting up were fewer, chances for losing out increasing. One of the things that always depressed him was a visit to the office from Jim Bayley.

James Hawthorne Bayley was a man of sixty. He was married and had grandchildren. Though he made an effort to keep himself erect, his shoulders were stooped. When he walked he shuffled his feet in a way that showed he had done a great deal of walking in his life. But his face was boyish. From the editor, Mr. Hamlin, to the youngest office boy, every one on the *Express* called him "Jim." Bayley would joke with the reporters, look roguishly when one of the boys told a piquant story. He always had a knowing, indulgent smile on his lips. The reporters always remarked how well he kept up.

In his day Jim Bayley was a power. He was in turn star reporter, city editor, managing editor on the N—— papers. Now he was an all-round man on the *Blade,* a struggling afternoon newspaper. He was working under a man he had brought up. Two or three times a week the city editor of the *Express* would call him on the telephone. There were certain stories no one could handle so well as Jim Bayley. The city editor would whisper a few words to him, Jim would nod knowingly, and disappear.

His stories always ran long. Occasionally Rand would remark this to Bill Francis, the political re-

porter. The two would smile, but the city editor would turn in the copy just as it was written. Jim was paid space rates and he needed the extra money.

Yes, Witte thought, it was a case either of writing stories like the one in the magazine and getting fame and a competence, or else of labor news, court news, city hall news, with a wind-up like that of Jim Bayley.

He went down into the street thinking how he was going to spend the afternoon and evening. It was his day off. Rand had given him tickets to an amusement park. But he had been to the park before and was bored. An idea came to him. He would go down to see his people. . . .

The Jews of N—— were huddled together in a few blocks in one part of the city. Emil had been through the district before. But those were hurried business trips. This time he walked leisurely.

The streets here were teeming with humanity. The heat had driven the people from their stuffy quarters into the open. Women were sitting in the hallways or on benches near their houses. They chatted volubly in Yiddish.

Evening was approaching, and the men and girls came straggling from the shops and factories, each met by the anxious look of a wife or mother, each questioned and talking about the weather, the heat, and how it was becoming unbearable around four o'clock, toward the close of the day. He sought out

a Jewish restaurant and took his dinner there. The place was small and there were only three people about the half a dozen tables. The meal reminded Witte of home. His mother cooked just such meals.

The proprietress of the restaurant came up to where he sat and talked to him. She was a middle-aged, motherly-looking woman, who had come to N—— recently from New York. She had never before seen Emil Witte at her place, and she wondered whether he was a recent arrival from New York.

She had taken Emil for a tailor, first, because all the Jewish young men who came to eat at her place were tailors, and secondly, because Emil's shoulders were stooped exactly like the shoulders of a machine operator.

Her questions, frank and penetrating, did not offend Emil. On the contrary, he liked to be talked to by the motherly-looking woman. Nobody had talked to him so kindly and with such whole-souled simplicity since he had been in N——, since he had left home.

When he emerged into the street again night lay over the N—— ghetto. The girls and boys had on their best clothes, and in pairs, or in couples, were going down-town, or to parks. The older people remained sitting in their hallways or on chairs and benches near their homes, drinking in the slight breeze.

He came upon a small bookstore. In the window were the works of Yiddish authors whose names his

father frequently mentioned. He bought several of the small, paper-covered volumes and started for his room.

His explorations of the N—— ghetto left him with a heavy heart. They revived memories of his own coming to the new world and of the four years of separation from his father, those tender years passed in loneliness and unutterable longing for his sire, a longing only partly quenched with the letter the postman handed them once a week.

He began reading one of the Yiddish books he had bought. The little volume dealt with the very things he had been thinking of, the pathos of parting and the joy of the reunion in the new world of an immigrant family. It was midnight when he laid aside the book after reading it from cover to cover. Just before he fell asleep an idea came to him. Why not write up the N—— ghetto? He would try it in the morning. He set his alarm clock at seven.

He wrote the story the following morning, and the morning after and the third morning. Then he found that he had begun telling his story at its weakest point and rewrote it anew. Stealthily he laid down the manuscript on the city editor's desk, after receiving his assignments for the day, and made a rush for the elevator. He did not wish to meet Rand's gaze, nor see what disposition the city editor would make of his uncalled-for contribution.

When Witte returned to the office at five o'clock and sat down to write his labor items, Rand called him. The city editor introduced him to the Sunday editor. Rand had turned over Witte's story to the latter.

The Sunday editor — Witte did not get his name and was too timid to ask — explained what he wished. Could not Witte elaborate the story in one or two places — he pointed out the places — and return it in the morning?

Nothing further was said about the story till midnight Saturday. At that hour the city editor tore off a page from the Sunday supplement and handing it to Witte said:

"Here is your story."

Across the seven columns of the page was the headline, "An Evening in the N—— Ghetto." The story and illustrations covered the entire page. Some of the more striking sentences in the story were boxed near the top of the page. Above the body of the story in big letters came the legend — "By Emil Witte —"

Monday noon Witte found on his desk a letter from Lena Rosen. There were congratulations on the success he had made in journalism and much praise of his story. . . . Then there came some gossipy news about Spring Water's young set — the Jewish set. As he read the letter Emil became conscious of how far he

had drifted from this set, which consisted of boys and girls of his own age, his former schoolfellows, in the years he had been at the University.

The letter wound up with a plaintive note. Life in Spring Water was dull. Lena would be happy if she too could go to a city and strike out for herself. But her parents would not hear of it.

"They are keeping me here 'like a goose in a cage,'" Lena wrote, Englishing a Yiddish phrase of her mother's.

Before Emil's eyes rose the face of Lena, so reminiscent of the fat Mrs. Rosen and yet so wonderfully different. For Lena was slender and stately and had refined manners and an aristocratic bearing.

He thought of the girl all afternoon. In his mind he talked to her. Oh, how he talked! He never knew he could be so eloquent. He talked of his future. It was to be a big future. No, not money. He would do things — big things. He would write. He would write about the poor and disinherited, the people he was meeting on his rounds as a labor reporter, the misunderstood, submerged people of the slums. . . . And in his mind's eye he saw Lena agreeing with him — understanding him — ready to follow him to the ends of the earth —

There were the usual number of clippings on his desk, obituaries from the evening papers, to rewrite. He wrote the items rapidly one after the other. He

felt equal to tasks ten times as great. He welcomed work.

A soreness against the city editor arose in his heart. What was he keeping him on this drab stuff for, instead of giving him real work to do, instead of giving him assignments that would offer an opportunity to show his skill as a writer? But the soreness soon gave way to the pleasant recollection of Lena's letter. What a fine judge of writing she was! How enthusiastic she was about his story, how she understood him —

"Witte," Rand bellowed across the room, "this is a metropolitan city. You left out the street number in the Winkelmann obit. What is it?"

Emil fumbled among his papers, found the clipping and read off the number, under the city editor's blazing look. He felt as if he had received a ducking in ice water. The picture of Lena and all the bold and pleasant thoughts with which it had been associated that afternoon faded from his brain. He was gloomy the rest of the evening. . . .

CHAPTER VIII

CHICAGO

WITTE'S story in the Sunday paper was not without effect. The city editor began giving him better assignments. The young reporter's ability to enliven the subject he wrote about, to heighten and vivify the human touch in it, called forth Rand's favorable comment.

Rand's opinions were highly valued by the staff of the *Express*. The city editor was an importation from Chicago where he had been the head of the copy desk on a leading paper. His praise of Witte rapidly changed the latter's status in the office. Caste lines that were tightly drawn against the "cub" in the first few weeks began to drop off. He was treated as an equal. Some even tried to be chummy with him.

Riley, the hotel man, was the first to swing around.

As Witte was clearing his desk one night a little after midnight, Riley asked: "Going over to Schroeder's?" And they went out together.

Schroeder's was a saloon around the corner from the *Express* office. Here the men working on the

morning papers found an especially prepared lunch for them at midnight, and would spend an hour eating and chatting before going home.

Witte ordered a beer.

"Take a regular drink," Riley said encouragingly. "You are a full-fledged reporter now. That story of yours goes on the first page in the morning. Rand was tickled with it."

From that night on the subject of drink became the nightmare of Witte's existence in N——. Whisky revolted him physically. This abhorrence of it made him laughable in the eyes of the widening circle of reporters he came to know.

One night as he passed up the bottle and told the waiter to give him a beer one jovial member of the company hailed him as a disciple of Carrie Nation. On another occasion his repugnance to whisky was suddenly made a race issue.

One of the reporters had read that the Jews as a race were temperate to a high degree. He recounted this to the company, and each began asking Witte whether the Jews were averse to drink on religious grounds.

These questions made him uncomfortable. It annoyed him to have his race and religion, and the thousands of years of history back of them, dragged into a matter of his own personal distaste. Why charge up a trifling peculiarity of his to the fact that

he was a Jew? Why raise the question of race and on that ground single him out as "different"?

He resolved to end these annoyances. He would take a drink of whisky now and then, or at least he would try to have the appearance of drinking. But his "appearance" was soon detected. Riley once held up Witte's glass with a thimbleful of whisky in it for the inspection of the company, and they had a hearty laugh at his expense.

Embittered, Emil Witte now began taking at least one "good" drink an evening, although he felt sick for hours afterward.

One night as he watched Riley empty his third glass of whisky, a question slipped Witte's tongue.

"Why do you fellows drink so much?" he asked.

"Well, what else would you have us do?" the hotel reporter laughed hoarsely.

The thoughtful manner in which Witte gazed into space finally communicated itself to Riley.

"You might as well ask why we stay in the newspaper business," the hotel reporter said. "There is just as much logic to it as there is to drinking. What other fun can one have at this hour of the night?

"I have sometimes wondered," Riley continued, growing morose, "where this is going to lead to. I have been a newspaper man for five years now. If I were a lawyer, a physician, a business man, I should be settled by this time. In this business nothing is

settled beyond the fact that I will be here again tomorrow night and will be taking the same number of drinks. I had ambitions to write once, but they petered out. They peter out with most newspaper men. The desire to drink is the only permanent thing about the business. Nothing else is stable in it. . . . Perhaps in a big city, in Chicago or New York, it might be different."

Witte asked about Chicago. Had Riley ever been there?

Riley had never worked in Chicago. But every so often a man would leave N—— to go to Chicago. In the majority of cases the fellows came back and were glad to get their old jobs again. In fact men from Chicago were often glad to slip into a good job in a smaller city, in N—— for instance. Rand was an example. In Chicago he probably would have remained a copy reader all his life. Here he was city editor; some day he might become managing editor.

Emil Witte and Riley were standing at the bar in Schroeder's, when two reporters of the *Dispatch* came in. One of them ordered drinks for the crowd. Witte had had one whisky, but having determined not to make himself conspicuous, he poured out another. When the bartender put the bottle before him for the third time, Witte filled his glass without further hesi-

tancy. It seemed to him that he was filling the glass not for himself but for somebody else. . . . That somebody else lifted the glass and drank to his, Witte's health. . . . Witte experienced a peculiar sensation in the front part of his head. His eyelids felt painfully heavy and sore.

One of the reporters began upbraiding Schroeder for the goulash and pot roast which he fed them on night after night. He suggested that they go to a chop suey place and have "a regular feed." The rest agreed. Emil heard what they were saying as if in a dream.

Riley saw to it that Emil ate his chop suey. Several times when Emil's hand rested on the table feeling too heavy to hold the fork, Riley urged him on. Indistinctly Witte heard his name hurled back and forth in the conversation. They were laughing, too, but it was not at him they were laughing, but at somebody else, who had been drinking whisky. Witte leered at that somebody. He was going to banter him, too, but his tongue refused to move. It felt as if it were glued to the back of his throat. . . .

The company moved and Witte moved along with them. Now he realized what an incumbrance that somebody else, who had been drinking whisky, was upon him. . . . He was constantly stepping upon one or the other of his feet. He was in his way at every step.

A piano was banging, and men and women were talking loudly, and laughing. . . . A man in a white coat and white apron was busying himself about Witte's table, and in a few minutes there appeared a bottle on it and glasses. Riley had suddenly disappeared from his side. Witte saw him vaguely floating about, talking to some people, men, women. . . . A girl at the neighboring table was smiling. . . . She was motioning with her head in his direction. She was calling him to come over, to sit near her.

He recognized her. . . . It was Lena Rosen. . . . Yes, Lena was sitting there at the table. Strange he had not recognized her at once. . . . He must go up and talk to her . . . yes, ask about home . . . that's it, about home. . . .

He tried to lift himself from his chair, but something in his throat was holding him back. . . . He must cry out, he must call for help — it was choking him.

He took hold of a near-by chair, stood up and tried to clear his throat. . . .

There was a shriek from several women and a scampering in all directions. Two men in white coats and white aprons took him under each arm and led him away. . . . Riley and another reporter began busying themselves about him, wiping his clothes.

"Take him outside, fresh air will do him good," some one suggested. Witte was led outside. The air

cleared his head. . . . He realized what had taken place. But he was too sick to think.

"You had better come with me to my room," said Riley. "My landlady is wise. She will fix up your clothes in the morning so they won't show a trace. . . . Such things happen once in a while. . . . I guess that chop suey disagreed with you. It came too soon after the drinks."

Witte's discomfiture of the night before, which was of course told in every detail by Riley to the other reporters on the *Express,* evoked a smile.

"It was not the drinks," Lindley, the city hall man, bantered the young reporter, "it was the music that did you up. I always dislike the music at Righeimer's myself."

Emil felt crushed. What a miserable game it was, this trying to stand in with the fellows by drinking at the expense of his self-respect, let alone his health. What a disgusting business!

Riley was right. It was the fault of N——. It was no place to be in. There was no atmosphere there. He must go to a city where there were literary people — where there was a field. He would leave the *Express* at the end of the week.

When Witte, the following afternoon, upon finding a favorable moment walked over to Rand and told him that he would leave the *Express* at the close of

the week, the city editor lifted his eyes slowly, and swinging back in his chair, merely said: "All right."

Before going out to dinner, however, Rand walked over to Witte's desk. He was pressed for men, he said. The *Express* had for some time been running with a shorter staff than usual. If Witte stayed he would raise his wages to fifteen dollars a week — he was getting twelve.

The *Express* was paying the highest salaries in town. The *Dispatch* would not pay him more, the city editor added.

Witte allayed Rand's suspicions on that score. He was not going over to the *Dispatch,* he said, but was leaving town. He was going to Chicago.

"Got a job there?" Rand asked. "Friends in the newspaper field?"

Witte admitted that he had no friends in Chicago and not the slightest outlook for a position, but that he wanted to be in a big city, was determined to be there.

"You'd better wait until you have more experience," Rand counseled. "Chicago is hardly a place for a beginner like yourself."

Witte made no answer to this, and Rand walked out.

At midnight Saturday, as Witte was putting the clippings of some of his stories in an envelope, Rand walked over to the reporter.

"When are you leaving?" he asked.

"In the morning."

"You are not wasting any time," Rand said, a thin note of sarcasm in his voice. The next instant his voice was serious again.

"Stick to that freak stuff, to feature writing," the city editor cast a final, friendly warning. "You are good at it. It will be this that will make you — provided, of course, you hit it right."

Witte thanked him for this kindly advice.

When the reporter had left the office, Rand, waking from a momentary revery, remarked to the political editor: "The boy will go far, he has character."

"Yes," Francis replied, "it is just like those quiet foreigners —"

". . . And here is the bathroom. Everything is nice and clean — and I don't allow any rough people here. This is not like them other places down the street that takes in any one who comes along. . . . I am perticular — and I don't allow any can rushing. It is a fine room for the money. You won't get anything better for two dollars a week in the whole city. . . ."

Witte had never been to Chicago except for passing through it on his way from the old world to Spring Water, thirteen years back. He had planned to stop at a hotel for a few days until he had acquainted him-

self with the town. But there were nearly three columns of advertisements of rooms to rent on Van Buren Street in the Chicago Sunday *Star* which he bought on the train. One never could tell how long one might have to wait for a job — he had better be sparing with his money. He would dispense with hotels and take a room at once. He checked his suitcase in the station. The first policeman he met directed him to a Van Buren Street car.

The landlady, a rotund, middle-aged Irish matron with a skin as fair as that of a young girl, was still speaking in her not unpleasant brogue when Witte handed her a week's rent. Would he take possession of the room at once? He would. She went downstairs to get him a key for the hall door. Witte moved the only chair in the room to the window and drawing aside the curtain sat looking out upon the street.

It was the middle of November, but the day was warm, almost summery. Witte had not eaten anything since breakfast and it was nearly four o'clock. A few doors from the rooming-house he found a restaurant which was kept by an Italian. A solitary waiter was dozing at a table. The deserted appearance of the place reminded him strongly that it was Sunday, that every one was at home, — with friends. He thought of his parents, of Spring Water. . . . While he was sipping his coffee he wrote a few lines on a postcard to his father.

Evening found him exhausted and gloomy. On the mantelpiece in his room lay several old magazines. He picked one up and began to turn the pages. There was writing in several places in a feminine hand. The room must have been occupied last by a girl. Where was the girl now? Did she go somewhere else to room? Or had romance set her free from the hall bedroom existence?

He thought of Lena. He owed her a letter. But he would not write until he got a job. He wondered what she would think of the step he had taken, of his going to Chicago. Of course she would know that he had left N——. She would learn it from his mother. She was coming to their house often of late, his father had written.

He closed his eyes and the room seemed suddenly to fill with Lena's presence. . . . He breathed the perfume of her hair. She was coming nearer — bending over him — He was asleep.

He was up at seven and by noon it seemed to him that he had passed a long day. In spite of his decision not to look for a job until he had acquainted himself with the city, he sought out the newspaper offices the very first thing and noted carefully the appearance of each building and the streets that led to it.

There was a dryness in his throat. His chest pained

him from the smoke he had swallowed. There was an incessant ringing in his ears. It seemed to him that he would never get used to the noise and clatter of the city, that he would never find himself in this maze of elevated trains and street cars that were chasing each other in endless streams.

The third morning there was a letter from his father. In contrast to his own few lines, his father wrote at length. It was a cheerful, encouraging letter. Aaron Witte approved his son's course in leaving N——. He felt confident in his son's ability to make good in the big city. "It may be difficult at first," he wrote, "but then things worth while never come easy —"

In spite of the cheerful tone of the letter Emil saw between the lines that it was written with an aching heart. His father and mother were uneasy about his fortunes in the far-off, strange city. His departure for Chicago had made the distance between himself and his parents greater. At the close of the letter his father sent him the address of a relative, a cousin of Aaron's, a Mrs. Bloch, who lived in Chicago. He urged Emil to go up and see her. Aaron and Rebecca, that was Mrs. Bloch's first name, had been almost like sister and brother in their younger days.

In the afternoon of the same day the weather turned colder. Emil walked into the reading-room of the public library and found every seat taken by jobless,

hungry men. Some read, others made a pretense of reading, and in reality sought to snatch a few minutes sleep without being caught at it by the attendant who was on the alert to weed out all who were not bona fide readers.

Emil consulted his map of Chicago and took a car to the neighborhood where his father's cousin lived. The conductor let him off at Morgan Street. He found himself in the heart of Chicago's ghetto. On every side were people of his race, talking the language in which his mother crooned him to sleep in his childhood, not stealthily and in hushed voices as they spoke Yiddish in Spring Water, but with perfect indifference, not feeling that they were making themselves conspicuous. They were at home in the Chicago ghetto almost as much as they had been in the Russian Pale.

Absorption in the sights about him delayed Emil's search for Mrs. Bloch. He finally hunted up the house. It was a three-story building. A woman who emerged from the dark hall, informed him that the Blochs lived on the third floor, in front. He went up and rapped at the door.

It was opened by a woman of fifty who had been busying herself in the kitchen.

"Are you Mrs. Bloch — Rebecca?" Witte asked emphasizing the first name last.

"Yes," the woman answered, backing her way into

the parlor so as to be able to discern the visitor's face better.

"I am Aaron's son — Emil," he introduced himself. He held out his hand.

But the woman did not take it. She gazed at his face and seemed unable to find words. She finally managed to speak:

"You are — Emil, the little Emil — Aaron's and Masha's son?"

Witte nodded stupidly. He was moved by the peculiar twitching of the muscles in the woman's face.

She took his hand and pulled him over to herself as if he were a small boy, and kissed his cheeks.

"Why, child," she gasped, as her eyes filled with a haze, "I raised you. I carried you in my arms as an infant. But you don't remember me. I left for America when you were only two years old."

She began to ply him with questions about his parents, tender, inmost questions. Emil felt ashamed for having prized his relationship to this woman so little but an hour before.

Mr. Bloch appeared to be of the same age as Emil's father and had known Aaron Witte since boyhood. He "knew" Emil in an instant.

"I could recognize him among thousands," he said, not without pride in his own keenness. "Why, he is the picture of Aaron."

The Blochs had two married children. The others,

a boy of Emil's age and a girl of seventeen, were still living with them. The boy, Sam, took an immediate liking to his second cousin.

After the evening meal the Blochs insisted that Witte go at once with Sam and move his things. They could not permit Emil to stay with strangers.

On the way to the Van Buren Street rooming-house Sam confided to Emil his ambitions. He was a cutter in a cloak shop. This was not a bad trade in itself, better than his father's, who was a presser in a sweat-shop. But he was ambitious. He was taking up a night course and would soon be a designer.

Mrs. Bloch and her husband meantime were discussing Witte's occupation. The husband spoke of it with high respect. His only regret was that Aaron's boy, as he referred to Emil, did not write in Yiddish so that he could read his articles. To have a writer in the family was no small honor.

"And is the boy very learned?" Rebecca asked.

"Learned?" Mr. Bloch exclaimed. "Why the boy is what might be compared to a great rabbi — been through a university! Only his learning, you understand, is different from that of a rabbi. It concerns itself with other matters, worldly learning."

Mrs. Bloch listened to her husband and her heart melted.

"What is there to marvel at?" Bloch said. "You know what a head Aaron had on him. If it had not

been for his great love for Masha he would have been a rabbi, one of the pillars of Israel now."

And then they talked of things more than a generation old, until Witte, accompanied by Sam, who was carrying his suitcase, came back.

Rebecca kept plying Emil with questions. She even asked him to recount his ocean voyage.

"Foolish woman," her husband chided her good-naturedly. "He did not come from the old world yesterday. He has been here thirteen years. He must have long forgotten his ocean voyage."

But Emil remembered his ocean voyage and described it minutely to Rebecca. He recalled a thousand things which he had never thought of in all the years he had been in the new world. . . . He took delight in remembering these things.

He fell asleep quickly, and he dreamed of the little town where he was born. He dreamed that his father was going to America, and that he was sleeping in the same bed with his father for the last time; and Aaron was kissing his head and face and was telling him that he must learn well and must obey his mother, and that he would quiz him on everything he had studied when Emil came to him to America. . . .

CHAPTER IX

THE ROAD TO NOWHERE

BY the afternoon the heavy snowfall had changed into a blizzard. It was the first touch of real winter Chicago had experienced that season, although Christmas was only a week off. Witte gazed through the windows of the *Banner* office at the gathering fury of the snowstorm.

It was after four o'clock. The regular news edition of the paper had gone to press. In the sporting department alone several men were still busy getting out the final extra. Witte had been a week with the *Banner* and was already familiar with the routine of an afternoon newspaper.

"Any engagements to-night?" Benton, the city editor, asked in passing.

Witte had no engagements.

"You might run over to the municipal lodging-house this evening," Benton continued. "This is the first cold spell. There is always a good story there on such a night. The morning papers will have the news. See if you cannot pick up a feature that will hold good for the early editions to-morrow."

Benton was only thirty years old. He had been married twice. His first wife died in childbirth. His second wife was a chorus girl and he divorced her. His temples were gray, in spite of the youthfulness of his face. He had a peculiar sense for stories about tragedy and misfortune. . . .

The young reporter was profoundly stirred by the scene at the municipal lodging-house. Tottering, gray-haired men, men in the prime of life, and boys, stood in line and submitted to humiliating scrutiny. Name, home address, where last employed, and why discharged, were written on a card and filed. When the registration process was over each was given a tin cup of coffee and a piece of bread.

Old age was stripped of all dignity here, manhood commanded no respect, youth emanated no charm.

With sickening painfulness, Witte, for the first time, became aware of the sinister power of circumstances. It took but a single keen look to discern and separate the few derelicts in the crowd from the honest, well-intentioned working men, clerks and, here and there, even a professional man. These men, Witte realized, were men like himself, like his father, like his friends. The difference between them lay solely in circumstances. An adverse turn of the wheel and he, his father, or his friends might be standing in the bread line, answering humilating questions for the sake of a cup of hot coffee and a shelter from the fury of

the blizzard. . . . The helplessness of the individual in modern society impressed itself upon him with staggering force.

As he stood there meditating, men continued to slink into the building by two's and three's. Most of them had no overcoats. They fought off the cold as best they could by pinning the lapels of their coats tightly across their breasts. Their hands bulging out of their pockets disclosed chapped and bleeding wrists. Their teeth chattered. Their drawn faces glistened from cold. . . .

The immense pathos of the situation left Witte as suddenly as it had come upon him. While his eyes were still looking at the throng of homeless men, who were now being piloted one by one to their cots, his mind's eye was seeing another scene. He saw Christmas eve in the country, the bells "answering each other in the mist" and ringing out the message

> "Peace and Goodwill, Goodwill and Peace,
> Peace and Goodwill, to all mankind."

These words kept ringing in his ear all the way to his room on the north side. Still under the influence of Tennyson's description of a country Christmas, he began to write the story of the municipal lodging-house. The story violated the first and, at the time, most rigid newspaper rule. It did not tell the news in the first paragraph. But it painted a vivid picture

of the lodging-house and its nightly occupants. It told of the lad of eighteen who longed to be home for Christmas. It told of an old man searching his faded memory for the name of the town where a married daughter of his was supposed to be living. It told of children who would receive no Christmas presents from their daddies, because their daddies were stranded, homeless and hungry, in Chicago. It told of wives and mothers who would sit down to a cheerless Christmas dinner, wondering where their loved ones were. . . .

The story stayed on the first page of every edition of the paper.

Some weeks later there was a strike in the stockyards. Twelve thousand Polish and Lithuanian laborers employed by one of the packing companies were informed that their wages, already small, would be reduced ten per cent., and they struck. The reporters learned that the company had no intention of reducing wages. But there were agitators at work among these alien laborers, trying to organize them into a union. To counteract the work of these agitators the company precipitated the strike by announcing that it proposed to reduce wages.

Witte reported this to the city editor, but Benton listened with unmoved face. The newspapers, however, were not unkind to the strikers. Because of the cold weather there was a great deal of suffering

among the foreigners and their families. This made excellent material for pathetic stories.

Benton encouraged Witte to dive deep into the well of misery in the "Back of the Yards" district, where the strikers lived.

The *Banner's* well-to-do readers on the avenues read these stories with a great deal of pleasure. There was a tug at the heart in them. Letters praising the *Banner* for its big-hearted, public-spirited reports of the strike kept coming into the office and were conspicuously printed in the paper. Neither the newspaper, which printed the pathetic stories, nor the readers who commended the paper for printing them, thought, however, of interceding with the packing company to end the strike and the misery it caused.

When the heads of the packing concern felt certain that their employees were sufficiently in debt to have more poignant worries on hand than organization, the strike was promptly settled. The company issued a statement saying, "While business conditions are such as to warrant a ten per cent. cut in the wages of our employees, the company has decided to take the burden entirely upon itself and will stand by its old schedule. The planned wage reduction is abandoned as a matter of public policy and good citizenship. . . ."

The action of the company was highly praised editorially by some of the newspapers. It was held up as an example of traditional American fairness. . . .

Day by day Chicago thus unfolded itself before Witte, with its tragedies, absurdities and brutalities. . . . The spirit that dominated the masses everywhere, it appeared to him, was one of fear. Fear of the job hovered over the thousands of department store girls. It hovered over the white-collared clerk and anæmic office worker. Fear was eating men like a cancer. It was present on every festive occasion. It was the guest of honor at every wedding. It sapped all joy out of life. It hung like a cloud over childhood.

Even more revolting than the fear that stalked over the greater part of Chicago were the caste lines that unconsciously divided the city. A caste psychology had sprung up in the city, with caste customs and even caste religion.

For miles and miles on the west, south and north sides of the city stretched districts of a sort of corned-beef-and-cabbage caste. The cheapest, most unwholesome food was eaten here, the cheapest finery worn, the cheapest amusements presented.

Yes, even the church was imperceptibly invaded by caste lines and class spirit. The sermons preached to laborers were of the old order of theology. The staple virtues of obedience and patience were extolled. The sermons addressed to working men at the beginning of the twentieth century savored strongly of the spirit of the middle ages. On the other hand in

the churches attended by men and women belonging to Chicago's upper caste, the porterhouse caste, one might call it, the "newer" theology was given full sway. Here ministers preached on the higher humanities, on the elevating effects of science, on the refining influence of art.

Some of these upper caste preachers substituted now and then a reading from Browning for a sermon. Others even flirted with Nietzsche from the pulpit.

It occurred to Witte that these aspects of society had not yet been treated artistically in America. There had been no novel written about the hopeless helots of modern industry. There was room for an "Uncle Tom's Cabin" of industry. Why not write it?

He began making plans for a book, a novel that should portray the Great Fear — the Fear for the Job — that hovered over the masses, that should depict the caste lines that divide American society. He would paint the helplessness of the modern factory worker, the horror and despair of worklessness. He would make these poor people so palpable that no one would mistake them, that once seen they could not be forgotten.

In the midst of these plans he was called by the *Morning Ledger*. Witte welcomed this change, for although it entailed more work, the new position meant that he would have the mornings to himself. On the

Ledger he did not report for work until half-past one in the afternoon. That, he thought, would give him the time to write his novel. He would work on his book mornings when his mind was fresh.

He carried his plans out for ten mornings in succession and put down on paper five thousand words. Then came a day when he was not feeling well. His indisposition lasted for nearly a week. When he came back to his book he felt that his thoughts were colorless and postponed writing for a few more days, waiting for his ideas to clothe themselves in bright, crisp phrases. But the crisp phrases refused to come. He tore up page after page of his writing because it was commonplace.

At the Reporters' Club he confided his anxiety to Sommers, a newspaper man older than himself by three or four years.

"It cannot be done," was Sommers' ultimatum.

"I, too, tried to write," Sommers added gloomily, "but did not get anywhere. The shop eats you up. It takes whatever fire and originality you have out of you. If you want to write, go into any other business but newspaper work, unless you can run a little country paper — that is different."

Witte liked Sommers. He liked the subdued manner of the Yankee, who was well read in Emerson. Sommers was never snobbish and often appeared to be pathetically lonely. He never swaggered, not even

when he was drunk. In this respect he was the antithesis of Pindell, another of Chicago's star reporters.

Pindell was the life of the club. He would come there about eleven in the morning, drink till one-thirty, when he would go to the office to get his assignments for the day. About four o'clock he would be back, sipping high-balls and holding forth to interested listeners from among the reporters on the afternoon papers, who by this time would begin to fill the modest clubrooms.

Time and again a messenger would come with a call from the city editor of his paper for Pindell. This increased his prestige. There were few reporters in Chicago who drank with the official sanction of their bosses. Pindell was one of these rare few, because no matter how drunk he was he would never let a story, or even an important point in a story, slip.

Pindell was holding forth. He had the physique of a giant. There was a haughty and at the same time keen look in his face, as if to say: "I can see through you even if I am drunk."

He was telling a piquant story about a Magdalen he had "picked up at Delmonte's." He had been bent on finding out whether the girl had a soul. After the sixth highball her soul came to the surface. She wept on his shoulder and told him about a mother she had

not seen in five years, a mother who was haunting her nights. And that was why she never could stay sober. . . . He, Pindell, had not been inclined to believe her at first. But her tears were so genuine, and she spoke so circumspectly about her home and family, at the same time refraining even in her drunkenness from mentioning names or the town she came from, that he was convinced she spoke the truth.

"If she were to commit suicide to-night, what a fine story it would make," Pindell reflected, a sad irony playing about his drooping chin. "I'll wager I could put her story on the first page of every newspaper in the country to-morrow morning."

Sommers and Witte were sitting two tables distant from the one occupied by Pindell and his band of listeners.

"It is this," said Sommers, "that makes me so weary of newspaper life. Look at Pindell — gifted, brilliant. Yet what is there for him here? Forty dollars a week, affairs with Magdalens and drink. As long as his constitution holds out he is holding his job and is perhaps having some fun in life, though I am not so sure about that — the Great Fear haunts him; he holds his job only from week to week. Should he break down, as he must, he will join the great number of former newspaper satellites in this town who once held forth exactly as he does now, and who to-day are glad to hang on to some insignificant job on a paper

and eke out enough to pay for their board, room and medicine."

"There was a time," he continued, pronouncing his words slowly, "when newspaper work led somewhere. To-day newspaper work leads to nothing but drink. It is the road to nowhere. It no longer even lays claim to art. It has been too much commercialized for that. The newspaper writing of to-day is as removed from artistic work as tombstone cutting is from sculpture. Newspaper work crushes art, crushes idealism. It unfits a man for sustained work because it makes him too cynical to make sacrifices. Drink is about the only relief the genius of the profession has. That is why our best writers drink themselves to death. Every newspaper office is a graveyard of shattered illusions."

Sommers grew morose as he spoke, a mood of his with which Witte was familiar. He stared vacantly for some moments, then added dreamily:

"Some of these days I shall take the road. I shall go to the country, to some small town. I want a home there with a patch of ground back of it and a lawn and flower bed in front. And I want a wife in that home who would never even suspect all that I know, all that I have seen of life, a wife who goes to bed at ten and rises at seven, who does not 'take her dinners out,' who does not know how to sign waiters' checks, who goes to church and kneels in prayer and feels better

for having done so — I am sick of the city. . . . Sick of its painted women and wise landladies and smirking waiters —"

Sommers rose to go to the office. Witte remained alone and was pondering over the latter's words and over his book, plans for which were becoming more and more tangled and complex. It was his day off and he could sit at the club as long as he liked. He rang for the waiter. . . .

CHAPTER X

THE NEW YEAR

THE outburst on the part of Sommers was not new to Witte. Other newspaper men complained about their profession fully as vehemently. They called the occupation of a newspaper writer a blind alley, fretted and vowed they would get away from it at the first opportunity that offered itself.

"It is part of the newspaper man's life," a middle-aged copy reader once remarked to Witte, with a crooked little laugh, "to assail his profession, to dream of a farm or a country paper. I bought a half dozen acres once myself and ran a chicken farm for a while. I was going to enjoy nature and the quiet life; to go to bed with the stars and rise with the sun. After some months it began to pall on me. In less than a year I was in Chicago again, working for twenty-five dollars a week on the copy desk of a morning paper and renewing my acquaintances with the bartenders along the row. The work calls, and the call is strong. . . ."

The atmosphere of the club had become dense with smoke. Emil climbed half a flight of stairs to the

sidewalk. It was a warm September night. He swung aboard a street car going to an amusement park at the edge of the city.

In the overcrowded car young couples were eyeing each other hungrily. Here and there a youth had his arm about a girl's shoulders or waist. Everything in the car breathed the atmosphere of love and desire. Emil thought of Lena.

He had not written to her for six months. And what pains he had gone through to refrain from writing! To Lena he was already a made man, a success. She could not conceive of a writer on the Chicago *Ledger* as otherwise than big and successful. Her last letters to him were full of tenderness. There was unbounded confidence in them for Witte, faith in his ability, and tender expectancy. . . . In excited moments Lena pictured Emil as her knight, who would come and carry her off with him to the big city and introduce her to its turbulent and fascinating life. She asked him much about his life in Chicago, the "Bohemian life of the writer," as she once phrased it.

And how Emil would have liked to be that knight! How he would have liked to come, take Lena away with him, away from everybody, and have her all to himself, to talk to her, to confide in her. . . .

But what was the use! He was a twenty-dollar-a-week reporter. His daily bread depended upon a

thousand whims. The city editor was the arbiter of his fortune. And what a fickle arbiter he was! A little better story by a rival, a scoop by another paper, and off came the reporter's head. Clearly, under such circumstances, with so unsteady a job, a man could not think of marriage, could not think of settling down.

In such moods Witte would cast about for a place with some permanency in it. He wrote to several weeklies in the East. A good literary weekly would give him an opportunity to show his ability, he mused. There would be a chance on such a weekly to do something in the way of literary criticism that would attract attention. . . . In the meantime, however, he would wait. While waiting for the job with a future, with permanency, Witte refrained from writing to Lena.

He slept ill that night. When he awoke it seemed to him that the fragrance of Lena's hair filled the room. . . . He recalled that he had not been home for more than a year. At the first opportunity he would take a few days off and would visit his parents. He would speak to the city editor about it at once. He would go home within two weeks.

The thought braced him. He began to dress briskly. He stepped out into the hall and looked over the mail. There was a letter for him from his father. but it was bulkier than usual. It contained a New Year's card. That very evening the Hebrew New Year (Rosh Hashonoh) would be ushered in.

In his letter Aaron expressed his and Masha's regret that Emil could not be with them on this holy day. The other children would be there, Clara, her husband and their children, his brother Harry and his family. There was a mute appeal in the letter for Witte to come home. With the appeal, however, went a pathetic note of resignation, as if Aaron knew that his wish could not be granted.

The Hebrew felicitations on the New Year's card brought back to Emil his childhood in the old world and the awe which the New Year then inspired. He had long since outlived that awe. Darwin, Spencer, Georg Brandes had played havoc with the faith of his fathers.

Rosh Hashonoh, however, had its human side, and that appealed to Emil. In the Synagogue (there was a synagogue in Spring Water by this time) all the people he knew would be gathered that evening and the following morning. . . . Lena would be there — An instant decision flashed through his brain. He packed his bag and hastily made for the office.

The city editor wondered what brought him down so early. Had he a morning assignment? No. But he had an urgent call to come home.

"Sickness," Witte stammered, as he perceived the dubious look in the city editor's face. He got the desired two days' leave.

The Witte family was sitting about the table upon

which towered a five-branched candlestick. Aaron addressed himself constantly to one or to the other of his children. He looked especially after his little grandchildren. Clara had two boys, and Harry a girl and a boy. One of Clara's boys bore a close resemblance to his brother Simeon, and Aaron occupied himself with this grandson constantly. . . .

Clara mentioned Emil's name. She wondered where he was at that hour and whether he was working on the holy day. For an answer Aaron tugged at his mustache. Masha slunk back into the kitchen and stealthily wiped away a tear.

The conversation at the table was becoming animated. Alex was making jokes at the expense of Harry's wife, Hanna. A lively repartee arose between them. It was brought to a halt by a knock at the door. Before Masha had time to rise from her chair, the door flew open, and Emil stood before them.

Had Emil been the sole survivor of a ship that had gone down in midocean he could not have been given a more pathetic welcome. Masha clasped her arms about him and again and again kissed his face. Aaron himself was nigh unto tears.

The evening meal lasted until nearly ten o'clock. Not in years had the Witte home seen such a delightful evening. Masha was all excitement and happiness. Aaron sat listening to the happy chatter of his

children with beaming face. Alex was the leader in the conversation. As a former Chicagoan he questioned Emil about a thousand different things and places.

Then came the news of Spring Water: Clara was telling that. Emil listened to a lot of irrelevant things, while his mind was searching for something else. Clara turned on him suddenly.

Had he heard that Lena Rosen was going to be married? And to whom? He could not guess in a thousand years. The girl was engaged to the middle-aged Mr. Bobrick, the owner of a department store in a neighboring town. It was, of course, Mrs. Rosen's doings. Bobrick was worth close to half a million dollars. Poor Lena was simply a puppet in her mother's hands.

As Clara was speaking about Lena, Masha watched Emil's face from which all cheerfulness had fled. Her son's evident pain communicated itself to the mother's heart. . . . In spite of the fact that Emil had never confided his feelings toward Lena to any one, his mother knew what these feelings were. She had guessed them from the visits which Lena had been making to the Witte home, the suppressed eagerness with which the girl inquired about Emil —

With the news of Lena's engagement Emil's visit to Spring Water seemed to have lost all meaning. He wished himself on the train again, and in Chicago.

Instead, however, he took the candle from his mother's hand and went upstairs —

His room was unchanged, as if it had been waiting for him all this time. The books were standing in the bookcases precisely as he had left them. On a shelf lay bundles of compositions and themes — the themes which had first awakened in him the desire to write.

He stood for some time looking over the books and tablets, trying to decipher here and there his own notes, to read his own writing. A strange loneliness came over him, and a feeling of futility. Of what use was all this studying and hard work? Why had he wasted his youth poring over books? Was it only to be unfitted to gain the sweetest prize in life — Lena? He had no bitterness against the girl. Had she not given him ample evidence of love? It was he who ceased writing to her because he did not feel equal to the task of settling down, because of his job, which was like shifting sand, because of the work for which he had been fitted by these books and study — work that is unsettled and uncertain.

He sat down at the edge of the bed and surrendered himself to torturing thoughts. Everything ahead of him seemed hazy. What was the meaning of his struggles and hardships? Lena would never be his —

He groaned.

His mother's footsteps — he had no difficulty in recognizing them — became audible. Masha walked in and sat down beside him on the bed. He did not stir from his place. He could not bring himself to utter a word. It was his mother who plied him with questions:

Was his room comfortable in the city? Were his meals regular? And was he sure that night work was not injuring his health? Ah, those American customs — whoever heard of people working at night instead of in the daytime!

She went over to more serious and intimate questions. Had he already attained the things he aimed at? Was he secure in his place now? Would he be able to settle down soon — She would so like to see him settled. It was time. Harry had married when he was several years younger than he. All of his schoolmates were now married. Several of them had babies —

Mrs. Witte stopped in her questions and waited for an answer. But no answer came. Emil sat there pressing the palms of his hands against his face. Anxiety seized her. Was he ill? She leaned over closer to the bent form of her son and perceived the suppressed heaving of his shoulders. Emil wept —

He saw Lena in the Synagogue the next morning, but had no opportunity to speak to her until after the

services. She was hemmed in between Mrs. Rosen and a man in the forties, who had at least sixty pounds of excess flesh on his body. The man was evidently very warm and was constantly wiping his red apopletic neck and forehead with a handkerchief. It was Lena's fiancé, Mr. Bobrick.

They met near the door and the first word Lena spoke to Emil was to ask him to come over that afternoon. It was plain that this was foremost in her mind. She had hardly finished her sentence when Mrs. Rosen was at her side with Mr. Bobrick. Mrs. Rosen greeted Emil with seeming cordiality, but her eyes were not friendly. Lena did not introduce her fiancé to Emil, and in fact avoided looking in his direction. Mrs. Rosen at once introduced Bobrick to Emil with that lack of formality toward the latter which might have made her Emil's aunt.

Witte paid no attention to Mrs. Rosen and quickly surveyed Mr. Bobrick. The department store owner had a good-natured and apologetic smile. It was evident that he was aware of his shortcomings. He spoke English not only with an accent, but ungrammatically. As Lena's older brother, or uncle, he would have been in place. As her lover, her fiancé — he was a travesty.

Witte was too much absorbed in his study of the man for words. Bobrick, on the other hand, did not know how to start a conversation with the young

man, who had the advantage over him in refinement and ease of manners. . . . Mrs. Rosen put an end to the embarrassment of her intended son-in-law by bidding Emil good day and starting off, flanked by Lena on one side and by Mr. Bobrick on the other.

Witte was astonished to find Lena so unhappy. He had never believed that her smiling eyes could acquire such a crushed, lifeless look in them. Her face was thin, and altogether she looked as if she had been through a severe illness.

On the way home Emil acquainted his father with his own plans and problems: The road which he had chosen, the road to a literary career, was no easy one. It was a life of uncertainty. There was no likelihood of his being in a position to settle down for a good while, for years perhaps. Aaron listened to everything his son said without answering. There was nothing he could say. Here was a case where he was powerless to help his child. His heart was bleeding. . . .

Emil did not go to the Rosens' in the afternoon. Now more than ever he could not alter the situation. If it were madness six months back to propose to Lena to marry him on twenty dollars a week, it would be greater madness now to put his trifling, unstable income as a newspaper man against the department store owner, Bobrick.

The following afternoon he took a train to Chicago.

He arrived at midnight and went straight to the Reporters' Club. The men from the morning papers were straggling in one by one. He pushed a button.

"A Swiss cheese sandwich and a glass of beer," Witte ordered, without lifting his face from the table.

"Yes, sir," the waiter answered, and eyed him queerly.

CHAPTER XI

A DROWNING WORLD

NOW that he could no longer think of Lena in terms of endearment, night became a torment to him. How fill out the hour between going to bed and actual falling asleep without thinking of his awful loss?

Mrs. Bloch, whom he visited on his first day off, found that he looked bad and began showering Witte with solicitous questions about his health. Assured that there was nothing the matter with him, she insisted that there must be something wrong with his room. Anyway, why should he live so far away from them? She knew a young couple who had a splendid room to rent. He would feel at home there and it was only around the corner from them.

The caressing, motherly talk of Mrs. Bloch acted like a balm. In her presence he felt as if he were nearer to his home, to his parents. He went to look at the room she recommended. It was a splendid room. The people were friendly. There was no boarding-house atmosphere about it. The newness of the furniture, the freshness of the linen and curtains soothed his aching nerves. He took it.

When he told Sommers a few days later that he was now living in the ghetto, the latter grew enthusiastic.

"It is a great idea," he said. "There is lots of atmosphere there — real information. I always maintained that the trouble with us newspaper men is that we are such infernal snobs. We do not mingle with the masses. That may seem paradoxical, but it is true. We do not live among the people. We associate only with each other in narrow cliques or circles. Working nights we never get a chance to take out a girl — a decent girl, I mean. We do not even drink with the people. We have a few joints we patronize. The people we meet are detached, homeless individuals, with weary souls and a cynical outlook upon life."

Sommers rang for the waiter and continued:

"With all our reform movements, with all our spasmodic interest in the people, we have not said a new thing about the masses in years. The New York *Sun* prints a story about people on the East Side using their bath tubs for coal bins, and every city editor in Chicago demands from his reporters just such stories, regardless of truth. We are not sent out to study the people, but to get a story. If the paper wants a sob story, we must sob, and if the paper wants a mock story, we mock the people.

"The same trouble," Sommers continued, "extends to the greater part of our present-day literature. We

seldom paint real people. Most of our present-day stories seem made to order, manufactured."

On a dull Sunday afternoon the following spring, Witte, while waiting for an assignment, sat down at his typewriter and wrote a column story. He had conceived the idea for the story the previous evening. As he was walking home through the tenement streets shortly before midnight, he was confronted with a strange picture. The streets were deserted, dead. Every tenement hallway, however, framed the bodies of a boy and a girl. Screened by the veil of night, the children of the poor, in locked embraces and with passionate kisses, were dreaming love's ever-young dream.

Whimsically Witte wrote over the top page of the story the title, "Lovers' Lanes of the Tenements," and laid the manuscript on the city editor's desk. He was called a few minutes later.

"There is no news angle to the story," the editor said, "and I cannot use it in the *Ledger*. But why don't you take it to Mr. Manning, the Sunday editor of the *Star?* He buys stories. This is just the sort of stuff he wants."

The following afternoon Witte stood in the private office of the Sunday editor of the *Star*. Near a table strewn with manuscripts sat a man of forty, his feet, body and shoulders humped together in the chair.

Without changing his position the man looked up and asked, "What is it?"

For an instant Emil thought that perhaps he had made a mistake, and the individual in the chair was not the *Star's* Sunday editor. He had heard Manning spoken of with a kind of awe by newspaper men. He recalled, however, stories that were circulated about Manning's eccentricities as well as his genius, and decided that he must be in the presence of the famous editor. He handed him the manuscript.

Manning glanced at the heading, ate his eyes into the first page, turned it over and glanced at the second page, third, and tossed the story upon a heap of manuscripts to one side of the table; the entire process taking less than a minute.

"I'll use it," he said, casting a rapid glance at the man before him and reaching out for another manuscript. During all this performance he had not changed his position in the chair in the slightest.

Witte stood motionless. He was delighted. He wanted to say something, to talk to Manning. But the Sunday editor seemed oblivious of the fact that a man was standing in front of him. His eyes were on the manuscript into which he was jabbing his pencil. Witte slipped out of the room. His "Good day" had not been answered.

He submitted stories regularly to Manning thereafter.

"Working any place?" Manning turned upon him once as he laid down a manuscript.

"Yes, on the *Ledger*," Witte responded.

On another occasion Manning spoke to him somewhat longer.

One morning Witte found a note from Manning, asking him to come and see him.

"Would you like to go to work for us?" the editor asked, ignoring Witte's "Good morning."

And before Witte had framed an answer he began inquiring about his education, experience, the books he read. He did not ask about his nationality. But he asked how old he was when he came to America.

"Ten years," said Witte.

"You must be having a pretty vivid recollection of the old world then," Manning presumed.

Without waiting for an answer from Witte the editor began to dilate on the subject of Witte's job with the Sunday *Star* and its opportunities.

"Our work here is different," Manning said. "You are pretty much your own boss. You will be required to give about eight hours a day to the paper. The rest of the time you can use at your own discretion. There are no definite hours for work. You can come and go as you please."

The editor took it for granted that Witte had ambitions to become a magazine writer. He could see this, he said, by his stuff. It was not of course per-

fect writing Witte was turning in. It was in fact far from being up to the standard of the Sunday *Star*. But he, Manning, knew that Witte could come up to the standard. That is why he was hiring him. As for Witte, this was his golden opportunity. Work on a Sunday paper was leading directly into the magazines. It would give him a style and would open up vast stores of material for him.

Saying this, Manning smiled. It was the first time Witte had seen him smile. It was a whole-souled smile like that of a child. Witte felt that Manning was a man to trust. He could not conceive of his taking advantage of one.

The Sunday editor then casually brought up the question of salary. How much was Witte getting? Twenty a week? Manning supposed as much. Witte was not in his present state worth more than twenty dollars a week to the Sunday *Star*. However, in order to make it worth while, financially, for him to leave the *Ledger,* he would give him $22.50.

Emil accepted the wage without further argument, much to the surprise of the editor, who expected to pay him at least thirty dollars a week, and who put forth the $22.50 figure merely as "a feeler."

"Sit down," said Manning when Witte presented himself for work the following Monday.

The Sunday editor paced up and down his little room several times as if looking for something. As

he did so Witte observed the man. He was of medium height, sparely built, and with a slight stoop. His clothes, while of good material, were baggy. The top of one of his shoes was cracked and they looked as if they had not been polished in weeks. As Manning seated himself in his chair Witte finished his mental portrait of the man. He had a strangely built forehead. It was wide and roomy, and all the time Witte looked at him he could not escape the feeling that the head was much too large for Manning's frail body. The editor's eyes were roving, but thought was concentrated in them continuously. . . . The mouth had an indifferent, sarcastic droop. . . .

Manning ran his fingers through the pages of a little magazine. It was a Socialist weekly.

"An editorial here," he jabbed his scissors in the booklet and clipped the editorial, "takes the writers of to-day to task. Tons of paper, says this editorial, are devoted by American newspapers every Sunday to descriptions of the homes of the rich, to dinners given to monkeys, to pictures of society ladies and their cats and dogs. The newspapers, the writer further charges, scour the capitals of Europe for a bit of gossip about royalty. But they have not a word to say about our tenement homes, about our millions of submerged men, women and children, about our slums.

"'A world is drowning in tears,'" Manning con-

cluded, reading the last two lines of the editorial verbatim, "'and the American press is blind to it. It has no eyes for the despair and suffering of our own masses!'"

The editor gazed into space for some moments then turned to Witte:

"I want you to go out and find this 'drowning world' for us, for the Sunday *Star*. Find for me the submerged the Socialist writer speaks of, find them individually. Go out and talk with the old man out of a job, with the widow who bends over the washtub, and write their stories. Whenever possible get their pictures. We will print these stories and pictures in the Sunday *Star*. Some of this suffering of which the Socialist writer complains may be needless. It may be alleviated. But whether it can be alleviated or not we want to know about it, the Sunday *Star* wants to know it, its readers ought to know it."

After a brief silence Manning continued:

"You can write anything you like — provided it is interesting. We will print anything — provided it is true. Be sure of your facts and keep opinions, your opinions, other men's opinions, out of the story. I don't care for what you think, I care for what you see."

Another brief silence and the editor went on:

"If there are any mothers in this town who have no milk for their babies, find them. If there are chil-

dren who do not go to school because they have no shoes or clothing or because they have to work to help support the family, find them. Tell the public about them, but just tell — don't make the mistake which the Socialist writer of this editorial makes, which all Socialists make, don't scold. Don't preach. Don't try to get into an argument. Just paint a picture and leave it there. Preaching is nothing — it is not taken seriously, in the first place, and is soon forgotten in the next. A picture, if it is well done, burns itself into the brain. The reader will never forget it. It is more effective than all the oratory in the world. It is the best propaganda.

"You are a Socialist —" Manning began again with a faint, ironic twinge of his lips. An uneasy look appeared in Witte's eyes.

"I am not worrying about your political convictions," the editor said hurriedly, as if fearing that Witte might make some impolitic reply. "The *Star* does not pry into the opinions of its employees. You can be a Socialist — anything, so long as you keep your wits about you. If you take orders and carry them out satisfactorily, your private views are no concern to the paper."

Growing confidential Manning added with the kind of smile which made his face fairly childlike in its sincerity:

"I am a static. When you have been in newspaper

work as long as I, you will become a static, too — However, this is not what I meant to say —

"The *Star* is a big newspaper — it is an institution in Chicago. It is not out, of course, to gain recruits for Socialism, but it does want to know the truth. It must know the truth and must tell it to its readers. If people are starving in this city we want to know it. Ignorance is far more dangerous than truth. It is more dangerous than Socialism,"

Manning checked himself. Apparently he had talked more freely than he was wont to talk to reporters. In a dry, matter-of-fact voice, he added:

"Look into the 'Back of the Yards' district first. There are fifty thousand people, foreigners, living there. Sinclair got his 'Jungle' out of that district; see if you cannot get a page story with pictures for Sunday."

With this he dismissed the reporter for the day.

The stories of "the other half" which now appeared regularly in the pages of the Sunday *Star* provoked wide comment. Richly gowned ladies drove their limousines through tenement lanes or stopped in front of shacks, and searching out the families who were mentioned in the *Star* as being in distress, helped them with money and clothes. Here and there a widow was given easier work, a crippled old man was taken as a gardener into the country by a gentleman of Chicago's upper set.

The *Star* made the most of these occurrences and never missed the opportunity of calling attention to its "humanity," to boast of its "social service," and to advertise its kindness.

"Letters to the editor," came in large numbers. During the first few weeks Manning showed some of these letters to Witte and encouraged him to keep on getting just such stories.

Then for months and months there apparently came not a single letter in praise of these articles. This was all the stranger since Witte had had during that time several strongly pathetic stories in the paper.

Witte remarked about this to Norton, the man sitting at the desk next to his. Norton had been with the Sunday *Star* for three years. He was friendly to Witte.

"Oh, yes," said Norton, looking somewhat dubiously at the reporter beside him, as if to say: "Are you really such a simpleton, or do you merely pretend?"

But Witte was not pretending and Norton went on:

"Letters are coming in all right. But Manning does not want to show you these letters."

"Why not?" asked Witte.

Norton laughed indulgently.

"Don't you see," he said, "that if he keeps on showing you these letters, showing you how your

stories take with the people, you might ask for a raise in wages? And getting a raise on the *Star,* and especially from Manning, is as difficult a matter as for some of our captains of industry to enter the kingdom of heaven."

Norton knew whereof he was speaking. He was a man of thirty and had broken engagements three times because of the utter impossibility of squeezing a raise from his employers at the time he needed the raise.

Witte began to notice a change in the Sunday editor's demeanor toward him. Manning would give him a look in passing which chilled him to the bone. After such a look he felt that he would be called into the office the next minute and dismissed.

He wondered what might have offended the Sunday editor. But nowhere could he find an explanation. He confided his embarrassment to Norton. The latter laughed.

"Oh, well," he said, "that is just a pose of Manning's. There is an object in it, however. He likes to take a man down, so to speak, once in a while, to make him feel that he is nothing, insignificant, that his services are of a most ordinary kind and can be dispensed with at any minute."

Spring came. Manning dropped a remark that this was a good time for stories about children. Witte wrote a story about the deadliest block in Chicago —

the block where the death rate among children was the highest in the city during the summer months. He laid the story on the editor's table and went back to his desk.

He was called a few moments later.

"You are libeling a whole district," Manning exploded. "No one but the health commissioner can make such charges. You are damning a whole community."

The story had in fact been based upon figures of the health department. The statements in it were comparatively mild. There was no libel in it.

Witte knew these things and was going to say so to the editor. But he changed his mind. It could not have escaped Manning's eye that the story was quoting a prominent official of the health department. He waited, expecting to get the story back with instructions as to its rewriting. But Manning did not return the story to him. He laid it to one side.

Later in the afternoon Witte and Norton met in a near-by barroom.

Witte narrated the outburst of the Sunday editor.

"You'd better be on your guard," Norton warned. "There is trouble ahead for you. In fact there is trouble ahead for Manning, too." Witte looked up, uneasy.

"I have it from a reliable source," Norton continued, "that some of the directors of the paper are

displeased with your stories. You understand, of course, that they permit Manning to run these stories solely because there is good circulation in them. They don't care a rap about their humanity. But some of the directors feel that your stories are dangerous. You see too deep. One of them called you an anarchist. Manning has been getting some hard knocks on account of you. His whole policy of 'stirring up the beast,' as one of the directors referred to the working people at a recent meeting, for the sake of circulation, is looked upon with disfavor."

"Is Manning merely using my stuff as a cat'spaw for circulation?" Witte asked.

Norton reflected for some moments.

"Not solely," he answered. "Manning is a remarkable man and a great editor. He thinks that this sort of writing, writing about the masses and their problems, is the coming phase in American journalism, and he wants to pioneer in that sort of writing — it will go to his credit as an editor. Besides he is peculiar in certain respects. He is as tender as a child in some ways. He really feels for the poor. He likes to read about their troubles, to show their troubles. It is 'human interest,' you know."

"Do you think I had better look for another job — am I slated to go?" Witte asked.

"I would not say that," Norton added thoughtfully. "Manning usually stands by the man he hires. Be-

sides in this case he is convinced that he is right. He told a number of people that he considers your writing among the most vital stuff in the paper. They are putting the screws on him and he will probably put the screws on you. But he will not let you go. Anyway, wait and see what happens."

CHAPTER XII

MARRIAGE

THE article, under the heading "The Deadliest Block in Chicago," appeared in the Sunday *Star* just as Witte had written it. Apparently things had blown over.

One Saturday afternoon the Sunday editor called Witte into his office. Only one or two men sat about their desks. The majority of the staff had gone home.

"Sit down," Manning said, and proceeded to make himself comfortable in his own chair, a process which consisted of twisting and bending his limbs until he assumed a position not unlike that assumed by Mahomedans when they sit down to pray.

"What have you on your mind for the coming week?" he asked.

Witte suggested a number of ideas for articles.

"Those are all good stories," the editor said. "Keep them for later. There is something else I want you to do now. How many foreign nationalities are there in Chicago."

"Twenty, possibly more."

Manning pondered. Then spoke rapidly:

"No two persons on this earth are alike. Still there are certain distinct characteristics common to the men and especially to the women of each nation. Suppose you go out and discover what the distinguishing characteristics of the women, of the girls, of each of the twenty nationalities that live in Chicago are. Write a story about the women of each nation. Get a picture to go with the story. I don't want catalogues of their virtues, or the measurement of their figures, as a tailor would give them to you. I want good, readable, human interest stories with nice pictures for illustrations. Drop everything else and go on this series at once. I want the first of these stories in three days.

"You can go right on getting the economic stuff into your stories," Manning added after some reflection. "It is interesting. But make your economic stuff less conspicuous. Got plenty of feature in the foreground. End your story with feature and sandwich your economics in between."

Witte told Norton the substance of his conversation with the Sunday editor.

"I guess things have blown over," Norton said. "The directors may kick, but they have a great deal of respect for Manning. He is fearless and he has the brains. He is the best Sunday editor in the country, and they know it."

The series presented even better opportunities for interesting writing than Witte at first supposed. Every person has a story to tell that is interesting and often absorbing. The life of the immigrant, and especially of the immigrant woman, of the girl, can be relied upon to furnish plenty of thrills and pathos and romance.

Thus in the Lithuanian colony, on Canalport Avenue, Witte found two sisters who were working in a picture-frame factory. One was earning five dollars a week, the other four. The younger one spoke fairly understandable English. Both sisters had not been over three years in the United States. The girls were cultured and refined. In their home town in Lithuania they were considered "advanced." They read and talked about women's rights. But the town was lonesome. There was no outlet for their energies. They longed for work, experience. So they came to America, to Chicago. They hoped to find every woman in Chicago talking of women's rights and advancement. The picture-frame factory soon disillusioned them. The Lithuanian women who worked in the stockyards, pasting labels, or doing something similar, knew nothing of women's emancipation. They were too tired to think.

And not only was this the case with the Lithuanian women. All women in the circles in which these two

sisters moved — if circles they can be called — were working in factories. They were intensely interested in cheap things, in common things, like a ribbon for the hair, or a little trinket for the neck. They were in dead earnest about these things because their earnings were small, because they always lacked one or the other of these trinkets. And the lack of these made such a difference. One had to sit in the house a whole Sunday sometimes because a waist gave way in the washing or because one's stockings tore unexpectedly and there was not a quarter to get a new pair.

"And if you marry it is even worse," one of the girls told Witte, "for you add to your life of want and privation beatings from a drunken husband."

"A Girl's Dream of Chicago," Witte headed the article.

"You will hear from it," said Norton, perusing the story in proof.

Witte did hear from the story — from an unexpected source. He had had the pictures of the girls taken at a photographer's in the neighborhood. The day after the story appeared he went in to see the photographer, but did not find him in. He started to go, when the latter's assistant, a girl whom Witte always found at the retouching stand, called after him. In a few minutes her employer would be in, she said.

He was gazing at the pictures in the showcases when

the girl walked over to where he stood. She asked:

"Have you read any Russian books — Russian literature?"

He answered in the affirmative, mentioning several Russian authors he had read.

The girl nodded as if in answer to herself.

"But why do you ask?"

"I supposed you must have read," she said, "or you could not have written the story about the Lithuanian girls the way you did."

"Did you like my story?"

The girl looked up at him and Witte was astounded not to have noticed her eyes at once. They were large and liquid. A world of sympathy and suffering lay in them.

"It made me homesick," she said. "Especially that part of the story where you describe the peasant girls in Lithuania returning home from the fields in the evening, singing their songs. It was so true and lifelike. Were you born in the old world?"

"I was."

"In Russia?"

"Yes."

"Oh, I see," said the girl, and a faint flush came into her face. "I never suspected that you, too, were an immigrant."

A brief silence followed. Witte was observing his admiring critic. She was beautiful, but subdued. Ap-

parently there was no one to notice her, to fuss over her.

On the window near her retouching stand lay a book. He walked over and opened it. It was Daudet's "Letters from My Mill."

"You like Daudet?" he asked.

"Very much," she said; "his stories read like poetry."

"And you like poetry?"

"Don't you?" she smiled.

Witte now visited the studio frequently. Two or three times he took the assistant Miss Helen Brod (shortened from the Russian Brodsky), to lunch. Once they went to an amusement park.

One rainy afternoon he found Miss Brod all alone in the studio. The photographer, Mr. Altman, had gone downtown for supplies. Miss Brod was reclining on a settee in the waiting-room. In her lap lay a letter. The envelope was foreign looking. Her lashes showed faint traces of weeping.

"From home?" he asked.

She nodded.

"Who writes, your mother?"

"Mother, Father — both."

Witte sat in a chair at one side of the settee.

"Have you any brothers, sisters?"

"Yes, one — sister.

"And does she write to you?"

A cloud spread over the girl's face. In her eyes a mist gathered and the words came strained and subdued:

"She writes — rarely."

Witte was not certain whether the girl resented his intrusion into her private affairs. There was no anger or annoyance in her voice, only a quiet pain.

"Why doesn't she write often — to an only sister? I should think she would write often," he pursued.

Miss Brod took a deep breath.

"You see — she cannot. She is in Siberia. . . ."

The girl was going to break out in tears, but she regained her composure. Seeing Witte apparently waiting for the rest of the story she told it simply, briefly.

In her parents' absence from home her older sister on one occasion turned over the house to the revolutionary circle to which she belonged for a meeting. The police trapped them and arrested every one in the house, including herself, who was then only fourteen. Her sister, as the hostess, was charged with being the ringleader of the group and was exiled to Siberia for an indefinite period. The others were given sentences in prison.

Because of her youth she was released, but not until her father had stripped himself of half his fortune to bribe officials. And after her release she was kept under police surveillance for a year. At the end of

that time her father decided that one daughter in Siberia was enough, and he sent her, Helen, to America to stay with an aunt. For the past seven years, she added, her father had been trying to secure the return of his daughter from Siberia. As soon as her sister was released — if she ever were released — they would all join her in America.

Mr. Altman stayed away the rest of the afternoon. Witte had no particular reason for hurrying to the office, so he and Miss Brod exchanged memories of the old world. His memories were vague and childish, her's sharp and tragic. . . . He told her of his uncle, Simeon Witkowski, and described the latter's stay in Spring Water.

"Witkowski, Simeon Witkowski," Miss Brod repeated, trying to recollect something. She ran into the next room and returned a moment later with a much worn revolutionary pamphlet, which she apparently had read a great many times. Witte could not make out the title or the name of the author — it was in Russian. But the little brochure was prefaced with a picture of his father's brother, of the dead Simeon.

Twice he said good-by to her, but did not leave. Altman had called up to say that he would not come back to the studio until closing time — eight o'clock. Meantime Miss Brod was to go to supper.

Emil rose for the third time. The girl followed him to the door. He turned the knob, swung around and extended his hand to her. She took it.

"Good night."

"Good night," she answered softly.

Her voice seemed tinged with a faint regret. It occurred to him that she would spend a lonely evening.

He was still holding her hand. She suddenly became conscious of it and flushed. He felt awkward. His jaws trembled and a choking feeling rose in his throat. . . . He released her hand. In the next instant he had his arm over her shoulder and was pressing her close to his breast. His face was buried in her hair. . . .

They went down into the street together. A block away there was a small Bohemian sort of restaurant Witte patronized when in the neighborhood. He went in there with Miss Brod and sat at a table. The proprietor of the place came up and ordered from the head waiter a new tablecloth. He brought them water himself in sparkling glasses. He kept nodding to the girl and speaking to Witte about the weather in a manner indicating that he penetrated their secret. His demeanor seemed to say: "I congratulate you, I am very glad to see you engaged. You are a splendid couple."

And Witte accepted the wordless congratulation with the aggressive air of a man who has just carried off a great prize and is proud of his achievement. Miss Brod hung on to every word and motion of her master of less than half an hour with touching exaltation and devotion —

. . . The question of his earnings which had so unnerved him the year before now ceased to trouble him. Walking one evening through a scented terrace in Jackson Park, they made up their budget. It coincided exactly with his salary. The following evening they looked at some light housekeeping rooms advertised in the papers. They found two rooms that exactly suited their needs. Helen was fascinated with them. For one thing both rooms looked out on the street and had sunshine all day long. There was a small bedroom. Of the large room a part was screened off for a kitchen. The rest was to be a sitting-room by day and Emil's workroom in the evening.

Emil emphasized the word workroom. For he meant to settle down to real work. He would either start working on his book or else he would try to write articles for the magazines.

Helen had not been staying with her aunt for the better part of a year. Her relatives sought to impose upon her conventions which the young rebel did not approve. The setting of the date for their wedding

was therefore entirely a matter for her and Emil to settle.

"Let us make it Friday," said Witte. "Friday is an easy day at the office."

Emil and Helen had agreed to keep their marriage from the office as much as possible. He was not afraid, or anything of that sort. But a newspaper office, he felt, was a place which concerned itself little with the family side of the men or women employed. At most his marriage would be looked upon with curiosity. He would, therefore, for the time being not tell any one about it. He would not even ask Manning for a day off. They would get married Friday. Saturday was a half-holiday, and Sunday they would have the entire day to themselves. . . . There was no use dragging the happiest moments of their life out into the cold, unfeeling atmosphere of a newspaper office. . . .

They were together every evening during that week, planning their future or drinking each other in mutely, passionately —

Friday morning Emil came to Helen's room. She had been waiting for him, attired in a new dress she had made for the occasion. Emil explained that he was late because he had had an expressman take his trunk to — their home. The expressman would be there directly to take her trunk too.

When Helen's trunk had left and Emil, through the

window, was watching the expressman load it on his wagon, the girl made a survey of her little room which she was about to leave, and a sigh escaped her. She was taking farewell of her girlhood. She was slightly awed before her future, before the step she was taking. If her parents were only there to say an approving word, to give her a consoling look. . . .

Emil kissed her out of her reveries. On the street car, however, they came back to her. She was humming something to herself, and a mist gathered in her eyes,

"What is it?" he asked, referring to the song she was humming.

"An old Yiddish song," she answered. "I heard it on the ship when I was coming to America. I only remember one stanza of it."

"Hum it," he begged.

She half sang, half recited it, in a whisper:

"In a strange land,
Among strange people,
Who will bless us
On our wedding day?"

She grew silent. Emil thought of her parents in the old world and of his own parents in Spring Water.

"It *is* kind of lonesome to get married all by yourself," he remarked reflectively.

As if these words had snapped the last cord which

was holding her overwrought emotions together, Helen now lost all control of herself. The tears began to course down her cheeks. Several people in the car noticed this, and were looking curiously from Helen to Emil. . . .

He helped her out of the car. They were downtown. The bustle and noise of the street, the matter-of-factness of the day in the life of the city, broke the spell. She regained her composure. They walked a half dozen blocks to the City Hall, and half an hour later they emerged into the street, husband and wife.

They ate their lunch at a near-by restaurant, and Emil put Helen on a car. He was to come as soon as he could get away from the office to their rooms. She was to wait for him there — at their home —

On his desk lay a clipping from *Figaro*. It was an article by Marcel Prevost on feminine fashions.

At the top of the article, scrawled in pencil, was a note from Manning that he wanted it translated at once. Witte opened his desk and went to work.

CHAPTER XIII

THE COVENANT

THERE came a series of delightful weeks. The bareness of existence had disappeared and life assumed meaning. When he closed his desk after a day's work, the thought that he was going home, to his wife, thrilled Witte. To hear Helen busying herself behind the screen with their dinner was ecstasy. But the greatest joy of all was the evening.

Emil never thought life had the capacity for so much happiness as he experienced. For hours they would sit at the foot of Lake Michigan, leaning against each other, the warmth of their bodies intoxicating them — Wells of poetry were springing up in his heart. Ideas were twittering through his brain. Thoughts flowered in a thousand colors —

If he could but transfer these thoughts and feelings and dreams to paper, he mused, what wonderful writing that would make. By the time, however, they had returned to their rooms, languor invariably got the best of him and he would abandon himself to the enraptured delights of the senses —

The letters from his father became frequent. His

mother — Aaron always ascribed all tenderness for Emil to his wife — his mother was pining to see him — and their daughter-in-law. Could they not come out for a single week?

Emil postponed the visit to his home in every letter. The reason for the postponement was the one thing that was beginning to cloud his happiness. It was a question of money. He needed at least forty dollars to make the trip. The most he could get together was twenty. He had hoped to save the other fifteen from their expenses, but there were so many things their young household needed that at the end of each week he would find just enough left of his salary to last him until Monday, which was pay day on the *Star*.

His parents, however, became so insistent that he could not postpone the visit any longer. He borrowed fifteen dollars from Norton, and a beautiful morning in September found him and his young wife on the train, speeding toward Spring Water.

When Helen freed herself from Mrs. Witte's embrace she felt that she would love this woman as her own mother. Her vague fear of her mother-in-law, a fear which she did not quite admit to herself, let alone to Emil, was allayed. Mrs. Witte had but love and adoration for her daughter-in-law and melted at the sight of her.

It was a happy week and, as is characteristic of happy events, it passed exceedingly swiftly. As Emil

and his wife were bidding good-by to his parents, he noticed that every leavetaking from his family was becoming sadder, more difficult. His parents were growing not only older, but poorer. His father could no longer work as he used to. One could never tell when such a leavetaking would prove final for one of them —

He mused over these things in the gathering dusk while the train was tearing its way toward Chicago. Every few minutes the grayish blackness of the night was pierced by a light from a farmhouse. There was a serene atmosphere about each of these places. Here and there a farmer was seen walking toward the barn to take a last look about the place before retiring for the night.

They passed village after village without stopping. On the railway platform in each of these places there invariably stood a few young fellows, looking curiously at the speeding train, trying to get a glimpse of the people in the coaches — people who were hurrying at mad speed to Chicago at a time when they, the villagers, were preparing to yield themselves up to the silent powers of sleep —

Helen watched Emil with growing anxiety. He had not spoken the greater part of the journey. His face was grave and full of thought. She had never seen him look so worried before.

Emil did not notice his wife's anxious looks. He

was still meditating over the fact that his parents were fast sailing into the twilight of life. . . . Mentally he had long ago constituted himself the staff and support of his parents in old age. Now he saw old age and poverty making heavy inroads in their lives — and he was powerless to help them. . . . Financially he was still unsettled. His job was not any more certain now than it was before he was married. When he got back to the office in the morning he would have to face Norton from whom he borrowed the fifteen dollars for the journey.

The train was now cutting through row after row of tenement houses. They were in Chicago once more. With a feeling of guilt Witte woke out of his reveries and turned his thinned, lengthened face toward his wife with a smile. As if to make up for his neglect, he caressed her hand until the train pulled in under the glass roof of the railway station.

When the fact of Emil's marriage became known in the office the typewriters ceased to click for fully fifteen minutes and the staff discussed its youngest member.

Some considered his marriage an act of youthful inexperience which would prove costly. Others, especially the girls in the office, thought it was a showing of character. Apparently Witte had confidence in himself.

One day Manning called him into his private office.

"I hear you are married," he said.

Witte acknowledged the fact.

The Sunday editor fingered a newspaper clipping for some moments.

"Fixed up a flat?" he asked.

"No," said Witte dryly. "We have a couple of furnished rooms."

"I suppose you don't want to tie yourself down with a flat."

"Partly that," said Witte, blushing. For some time past he had been thinking of asking Manning for a raise. He now wondered whether the Sunday editor would say something about a raise himself. Manning quickly changed his tone of voice.

"Have you ever tried to write for the magazines?" he asked. "You ought to be getting a lot of good material in connection with your work here. The magazines ought to like your stuff. . . ."

With considerable satisfaction Witte that same afternoon told Norton that the Sunday editor had encouraged him to try the magazines. The latter laughed, a weary sort of laugh.

"So he is trying the same trick on you?"

Witte looked puzzled.

"Well, it is a compliment, anyway," Norton continued. "It shows that you are worth a lot more money than you are getting, and Manning is beginning

to be afraid you might strike him for a raise. This talk about writing for magazines is an old gag of his. He keeps his men working here for twenty or twenty-five dollars a week. When you come to him for a raise he makes an honest-to-God face and tells you that he positively cannot raise you, but that it would be foolish for you to quit, because the Sunday *Star* gives you such splendid opportunities to get into magazine work. And we poor fools fall for the flattery."

Witte stared vacantly.

"How long have you been with the *Star?*" Norton asked.

"A year."

Norton hesitated for some moments whether to say what was on his mind or not. Finally he spoke.

"You should have got a raise by this time. If you were single to-day and came and asked for it he would give it to you. I don't think he will now. You are married. A married man has a home and loves it. He won't throw up his job so quick. The *Star* knows it, and takes advantage of it."

"Is it that bad?" Witte asked. "I thought Manning was a man of fine sensibilities."

"Oh, yes," Norton made a wry face. "He has worlds of sympathy. That accounts for his success as an editor. But his sympathy does not extend to the *Star's* employees. He has the heart of a saint — in the paper. But it is as hard as flint when it comes

to meddling with the *Star's* payroll. The payroll, my boy, is the most sacred thing on the *Star*. Manning will shed tears for famine sufferers in China. He will speak in ringing tones for earthquake sufferers in Italy. He will pour into the *Star* the finest sentiments about the persecuted Jews in Russia. Yes, he will even gush over with compassion for the poor tenement children of Chicago. And he is genuine in his compassion. But all this does not touch the *Star's* payroll. On the contrary, it increases circulation. But when it comes to raising a reporter's wages, Manning listens to his master's voice, to the counting-room. The only way anyone gets a raise out the *Star* is by the use of the blackjack — figuratively, of course. Take the paper by the throat when it needs you most, threaten to quit then, and you will get a raise, not otherwise —

"I do not mean to impute that Manning is a hypocrite." Norton added hastily. "That he is not. I have known him to write a check for a hundred dollars and give it to a reporter to go home and bury his dead mother. But business is another thing. One of the prime requisites of an editor on the *Star* is that he keep the payroll down. If Manning did not live up to this rule he could not keep his job. He must sweat the employees of the *Star,* for the stockholders of the *Star* need the money."

Witte had no appetite at dinner and sulked the

greater part of the evening. Helen's perplexed look and mute appeal to explain his sullenness finally wrung an explanation from him. He told her the substance of his conversation with Norton.

She paled and bit her lips. After a while she said:

"I have known such things to happen in shops — in sweatshops. Manufacturers often take advantage of a man who is married. But on a newspaper — do they employ the same methods there?"

Emil was silent.

Winter was coming on. Helen needed a suit and shoes. He needed an overcoat. They had no winter underclothes. How would they stretch his salary of $22.50 to meet all these needs?

Helen was about to suggest that she might supplement his earnings by going back to her work, but refrained from doing so for fear of offending her husband. Emil had definite views on the question of women working after marriage which he elucidated to her once in the course of a conversation. He was not averse to married women working. In fact he approved of it — in theory. But, he had said, he could not escape the sentiment that he would feel humiliated if his wife went to work. A man, he felt, should be able to take care of his family. Out of regard for his feelings in the matter Helen avoided the suggestion of seeking employment.

On the way to the office the next day his courage

rose. He would go in and see Manning at once about a raise.

Manning had hardly seated himself at his desk when Witte entered and laid his request for an increase in salary before him.

"Perhaps at a later time," said Manning, "not now, I cannot raise salaries now."

Witte reminded him that he had worked for the *Star* for a year, that he had never missed an assignment.

Manning was unmoved.

"If I had worked in a grocery store that long," Witte said, his blood mounting to his face, "my salary would have been raised after that length of satisfactory service."

Manning looked up at him and even more emphatically than before repeated that he would not raise his salary.

Witte became very pale and walked out. He did not quit —

When Helen saw her husband's face she became frightened. He told her of his unsuccessful interview with Manning, adding with suppressed fury:

"I would have quit — if we were not married."

He was sorry he had said these words. Only after having spoken them did he realize their significance. Helen was in the midst of serving dinner. As he said this her hands fell limply to her sides and her cheeks

became very pale. She went behind the screen noiselessly, and only with great effort did she manage to get everything on the table and in its place.

She sat nibbling her food as if she were a stranger in the house, a waif picked up and fed by a kindly man. She did not look at Emil. She could not lift her eyes to him.

He wanted to take back his words, but did not know how. He was nigh unto tears at the sight of how deeply he had hurt her. He made a pretense at eating. Helen waited until he began to sip his coffee, then she slipped away. Emil did not lift up his eyes.

She did not return to the table and he could not hear her behind the screen. He stepped into the bedroom. She was lying on the bed, sobbing as if her heart would break. . . .

He gathered her quivering form in his arms and covered her with kisses. Muttering under his breath he begged her forgiveness. She must forgive him, she must not be angry with him. He could not endure to see her angry. . . . He had not meant it. Her love was worth a thousand careers to him . . . He would get out of the business entirely. There were a thousand things a man could do besides writing for newspapers. . . .

Helen finally composed herself sufficiently to speak.

She was not angry with him — how could she be? She realized even better than he how he had felt that

evening. And what he said about being married was not out of the way. It was true. Married men were taken advantage of. She knew that long ago. She knew it even more now. They were taken advantage of even on a newspaper, on the *Star*. The same principle apparently operated there as in the sweatshops. Squeeze all you can out of a man for as little as you can. That was the hypocritical attitude of present-day society. Encourage marriage on paper, in editorials, in the pulpit, and discourage it in the pay envelope. She had nothing to forgive. On the contrary, she sympathized with him all the more. She realized his difficulties, his predicaments. . . .

She nestled close to him in silence. Then she sat upright and by the pale stream of light which came from the next room she looked into his face. That look made Emil feel strange, almost fearful.

"Listen, Emil," she began. "Life would not be worth two cents to me if you failed in your ambition. But you cannot fail. Your parents have always had confidence in you. I have more confidence in you than they. And I tell you, you shall go ahead, you shall reach your goal. I shan't be in your way —"

A sickly look spread over his face. She understood the meaning of it. Putting her hand to his mouth, to prevent his speaking, she went on feverishly:

"Listen, I shall not leave you. I could not do that. I could not give you up. But I am not going to hinder

you in your work. I shall not be a drain upon you . . . I can earn my own living . . . and shall earn it. . . . There is no reproach in that. . . . Go right ahead with your plans. . . . Forget that you are married . . . remember only that you are loved. . . .

"In Russia," Helen went on after some moments, "lovers, husbands and wives are clinched in a deadly grip with autocracy . . . Now and then the autocracy gets the upper hand, and the husband is torn from his wife, the lover from his sweetheart, and is sent to prison, to Siberia, to death. . . . It is not that bad in America. We don't have to separate for long. . . . But don't be afraid to leave me when duty calls, when your ideal, your career demands it. . . . Don't be afraid to leave me. I can take care of myself. . . ."

Her flood of words was halted for some moments by the kisses which Emil was showering on her face, lips and neck. But she finally tore herself away from his embrace and continued:

"I want you to treat me as a comrade — I will not be a millstone about your neck. If you had a man as your dearest friend, that friendship would not prevent you from going on with your work. Love for your parents does not prevent you from leaving them when your career calls. Treat me as you treat your parents. I demand it of you. It is a covenant I am making with you. I shall not be a burden upon you. I shall not be in your way. . . ."

Emil was half listening to her words. . . . He was just discovering in Helen's face a depth of character and idealism that went beyond even his most extravagant dreams and expectations.

"It is a covenant I am making with you," she kept murmuring.

"A covenant, a covenant."

He tried to still her lips with kisses —

CHAPTER XIV

WAR ON THE UNBORN

THE next day Emil took stock. If he were to leave the *Star* he could probably get a job with another paper in Chicago. But there was little to be gained. It might perhaps raise his wages to twenty-five dollars a week. But he would lose a good deal of freedom. He would have less time to himself. The wiser and better policy was to stay on the *Star* until he produced something. He would lie low until his wings became stronger.

He began to live by the clock. He systematized his time and plunged into work. When he came home in the evening dinner was on the table. Half an hour was devoted to the meal. An hour was then spent in a chat with his wife and in glancing through the evening papers. Eight o'clock found him at a little improvised desk, straining the keys of a much worn typewriter.

He worked until eleven o'clock night after night. While he was writing Helen would sit in the bedroom and read. She noticed on the first evening of this new arrangement that her presence in the workroom was embarrassing to Emil and she stayed away thereafter.

Through the half-open door, however, she would

often watch him bent over the machine, absorbed apparently in the search of an idea, a word or a phrase. There were times when exhaustion was written in all his motions. He was tired. At such times Helen felt like slipping up to him, twining her arms about his neck and putting an end to his labors. But she refrained from doing so. Emil, on the other hand, stuck to his work as a matter of principle. Even poor work, he would often say, is better than no work, and that it was more practical to rewrite a thing than to sit and wait for an inspiration to come.

At the end of two months he had a story finished. The fact of having accomplished something, of having written something besides his routine work, cheered him and urged him on to further endeavor. He mailed the story to a magazine and at once proceeded to work on an article.

The material for the article proved more unyielding. He had to take off a number of evenings to verify certain facts. On other evenings he went to the library to read up on the subject. In the midst of these labors his first story was returned from New York with a printed rejection slip from the editors of the magazine. Witte promptly rewrote the first page, which had been slightly soiled in handling, and sent the story on to another magazine. He would not be daunted by a refusal. He knew that there was no royal road to literary success. . . .

His work on the paper was now getting more troublesome. Manning was exercising a sort of unofficial censorship over his stories. He objected frequently to certain ideas proposed by Witte. Norton was telling him that the Sunday editor was in disfavor with some of the stockholders of the paper. There was even a rumor that he might be forced out. Certain "tory" directors insisted on his dismissal.

Engrossed in his work and preoccupied with these stories, Witte had for some days paid scant attention to Helen. As he returned home one evening he found her sitting in a chair, crouched together as if in pain. Her face was thin and white.

"You are ill," he said, alarmed.

She made evasive answers.

He suggested that they go to a doctor at once. But she refused, insisting that she would wait. A day passed and then another. Helen was ill and haggard. but still stubbornly refused to see a physician. Witte determined that he would call a physician the next morning whether she agreed to it or not.

Late that night he was awakened by a peculiar trembling which seemed to fill the room. . . . He reached out his hand. Helen was not there. She lay at the other end of the bed, sobbing. He raised the shade and a flood of moonlight fell upon her prostrate form. He took her in his arms.

He questioned her with all the tenderness he could command. What was ailing her? Her half-spoken answers were vague and evasive. Her sobbing soon ceased, but he could not go to sleep. His mind was wide awake and working. Suddenly things became clear to him — He grasped her hand and in the dark he sought her face, her eyes. She, too, was awake.

"Are you —" The words stuck in his throat. His dry lips seemed immovable. He made an effort and gained control over his throat muscles. Rising on one elbow he stared in the direction of her face.

"You are going — to be a mother —" He tried to speak these words calmly, even tenderly, but failed. There was alarm in his voice, as if a great catastrophe had overtaken them. Helen broke out in violent weeping once more, and twining her arms about his neck, she clung to him helplessly. . . .

After a while she regained her composure. She tried to set him at ease. It was nothing. She was troubled, of course — but that was not saying that she was going to be a mother. That could not be definitely known for some time — It might prove merely a scare —

Several weeks passed. Helen had grown much thinner. Emil was trying to console her. There was nothing to worry about, he told her. But he himself was worried and nervous. Work on his article now lagged behind. His office trials weighed heavier on

him. Manning was head over heels in trouble, and the entire staff felt an impending change.

One afternoon when there were few people in the office, Manning walked over to Witte's desk.

"Have you done anything for the magazines yet?" he asked. Witte told him of his unsuccessful efforts.

Manning looked absent. It was a troubled look, and Witte saw it. It dawned upon him how close he and the Sunday editor were — they were both hired men. They were both responsible to some one, dependent upon the whim of some one, required to please some one.

"Better hang on to the magazines," Manning fired as a parting shot. And the meaning of it was clear to Witte: "You ought to try and get out of here," Manning had meant. "So long as I am here, I am protecting you because I have taken you on. When I am gone there will be no one to protect you. You will not be needed here. Go before you are discharged."

The soreness which Witte had nursed in his heart against the Sunday editor for refusing to raise his wages was gone now. Apparently Manning had his troubles.

He walked home from the office ruminating. He found Helen lying on the bed. She had not been feeling well that afternoon. Emil fixed up a meal for them. But she did not eat. At his suggestion that

perhaps he had better call a doctor after all she smiled weakly.

She was "better" in the morning. Again, however, she did not eat. Emil went to the office, saying that he would run in home at noon.

He could not get away until nearly two o'clock. When he entered their rooms he found Helen in bed. The landlady was sitting beside her, holding her hands. Helen's face was chalk-white and her lips blue. She glanced at Emil weakly and was about to say something. But the landlady warned her: "Hold your breath."

A carriage stopped in front of the house. It was the doctor for whom the landlady had telephoned at the request of Helen.

The physician ordered Helen's street clothes. She was dressed in a few moments. They helped her downstairs and into his carriage. The doctor gave Emil the address of a private hospital.

"What has happened?" Emil, left standing there bewildered, asked.

"As though you don't know!" The landlady snapped her jaws and walked out of the room.

At the hospital Witte had to wait for an hour. Finally the doctor emerged. He was accompanied by another physician. They talked briskly and seemed well pleased. The doctor informed him that the operation was "very successful," that his wife was

safe and would be home in a week or ten days.

"But, doctor, what happened, what did you do to her?" Witte stammered.

The physician's face flushed with anger.

"If you want to ask me questions," he said, "come to my home. You will find the office hours on this card."

When Witte entered his office an hour later, the physician looked him over curiously.

"Have you come to cross-question me?" the doctor snapped. "Do you know that your wife has only paid me half of the miserable sum of twenty-five dollars which I charged her for this operation? She did not have the other twelve and a half dollars. But it did not matter. I yielded to her pleas for this operation because she threatened to commit suicide. And she would have committed it. I am a pretty good judge of human nature. I know the sort of people who only threaten and those who do.

"In this chair where you are sitting," the physician continued, "she sat and wept and told me how a child would be her ruin. She told me all about yourself, your job, your employers. She told me how she meant to help you gain your goal. She sobbed until it seemed that her heart would break. She would not leave this room until I promised to save her — or read a death sentence to her. . . ."

The physician was silent, apparently waiting for

Emil Witte to speak. But Emil could not utter a word.

"Young man," the doctor resumed, and his voice was softer now. "You are working on a newspaper, you are a writer and are supposed to know life. But let me tell you something:

"War on the unborn is not made by physicians. It is made by society. The newspapers, and your Chicago *Star* in particular, are worried in their editorial columns over the growth of race suicide. But do they mean it? Do they pay their employees enough to raise families? Do they pay them enough to marry? Does not society, do not your publishers, the molders of society, of public opinion, look upon the boy of twenty-five, who marries as a fool who will soon sober up and realize the great mistake he has made? It is not the doctor who is responsible for the race suicide, but society. It is the curse of our civilization that it is taking the joy and pride out of parenthood by the ghost of unemployment and the terror of poverty. . . .

"Many self-respecting physicians, like myself, perform such operations not because we relish war on the unborn, but in order to save those already living. Go home, young man, and be thankful that your wife is now on the road to mental and physical recovery in a hospital instead of lying a suicide, as she would have been, had not I yielded to her plea.

"Go home, and when you have thought it over, and find that I have earned the twenty-five dollars which your wife was supposed to pay me, you can send me a check for the other twelve and a half dollars. But there is no hurry about it. Pay it when you can."

Emil walked through the streets of the city until late that night. He passed in front of the hospital several times. The last time he passed it was midnight. He did not know what room she was in. But everything about the building was quiet. Evidently everything was well.

When he entered his room he found a small handkerchief on the floor. It was Helen's. She had dropped it as she was leaving for the hospital. . . . He put the handkerchief to his lips. A stream of tears broke from his eyes. They were tears of sorrow and of longing for the girl, for his wife, to whom he felt he would always remain a debtor for her great love and sacrifice for him. . . .

CHAPTER XV

THE NEW KING

"WHAT does Manning mean when he says he is a 'static'?" Witte had asked Norton shortly after he came to work for the *Star*.

Norton smiled.

"By being a 'static' Manning means that he stands aside and watches the passing show with a grin. He means that after one is in the newspaper business a long time, one loses the power to enthuse over ideas, to fight for a principle. One becomes accustomed to the world's follies and does not try to reform it. One becomes indifferent."

Manning's description of himself as a "static" was not entirely true. He had not lost the power of enthusiasm altogether. He was not indifferent to everything. While it amused him to see people take up a so-called "cause" and fight for it, while he dismissed such people as "cranks," he was himself a "crank" in certain matters. One of these was the editing of a Sunday paper.

It was common talk in newspaper circles that Manning had made the *Sunday Star*. He had poured his life into his work. It was his pride that the

Sunday Star always led, that his ideas were invariably followed, copied. On the question of editing a Sunday paper, Manning was not a "static." He was not indifferent. He was positive. He knew what he wanted and insisted on having his own way.

Accordingly when the expected happened and he was called on the carpet before the directors at a very private conference, Manning entered the office with his mind fully made up. The directors wanted him to drop the "pessimistic" stories, as they called them politely. (They had other less polite names for these stories which they refrained from mentioning in the editor's presence.) They were unwholesome. The *Star* could not be confounded with those who try to muckrake. Let him fill the Sunday paper with pleasant reading matter. Why dig up the gloomy, unpleasant side of the city? Those things had better be left alone. It does no good to stir up discontent.

The spokesman of the directors, Mr. Andrew G. McNaughton, was a gentleman who headed a large manufacturing plant in Chicago. The editors of the *Star* spoke of him as "the good old Tory." He was accustomed to command. He talked to many of his lawyers much the same as he did to his clerks and office boys. To him an "employee" was an "employee," no matter what work he was doing.

Manning listened to a long tirade by McNaughton in silence. The silence of the editor, the steady gaze

of his gray eyes irritated the manufacturer. As the chairman of the Board of Directors, McNaughton could dictate the policy of the paper. Manning knew that; he acceded to it. McNaughton could order things with regard to the management of the *Star* as he could with regard to the management of his factories. There was nothing for Manning to do when McNaughton was exercising his rights as chief stockholder. It was his property and he had a right to order what should and what should not go into the paper.

The continued silence of the Sunday editor finally brought McNaughton out of all patience. He began to cast aspersions upon Manning, upon his ability as an editor. In a fit of suppressed rage he suggested caustically that perhaps Manning was combing the slums and digging up "these sewer stories" (he pointed to a number of clippings which lay on the table in front of him) because of a famine of ideas.

The chief of the stockholders had ventured beyond his boundaries. He could dictate to the Sunday editor, but he could not assail his professional pride.

At these words of McNaughton, Manning became very pale. A smile played about his lips and his drooping, sarcastic chin, a smile of boundless, crushing contempt. He straightened up in his chair and with a slightly exaggerated politeness replied to the chief stockholder. He had great respect for Mr. Mc-

Naughton's ability as a business man, Manning said speaking slowly and still smiling, but he considered the latter's opinions about editing a newspaper entirely worthless.

It was McNaughton's turn to grow pale. He was beaten. Manning came from a New England family whose traditions went back to pre-Revolutionary days. Several well-known writers had come from that family. Manning's father had been a famous editor in his day. Manning's sneer at McNaughton's attempt to judge him, to condemn him as an editor, struck a vulnerable spot. McNaughton personally was not cultured. As for his family — he sidetracked all reference to it by stressing the fact that he was a self-made man.

Manning dropped his smile. He spoke in dead earnest now.

"You object to my printing stories which deal with vital facts," he said, "facts that are of great concern to the community, to the nation. 'Sewer stories,' you call them. You speak of them with contempt. The German government, the statesmen of Germany, do not sneer at these facts. Belgium does not sneer at them. They know better over there. They are interested in these problems and try to remedy such conditions.

"A paper like the *Star* should be alive to all the issues and problems and wants of the people. It

should know the city, yes, even to the ratholes and sewers, where the masses live and breed anger and discontent. . . .

"Let me predict," Manning continued, lowering his voice, but lending a prophetic emphasis to it, "let me predict that in five years from now the same issues which I am now taking up in the Sunday pages, buried between columns of advertising, will command a respectful hearing on the editorial page of the *Star*."

The directors shifted uneasily in their seats. McNaughton quickly asserted himself. Assuming a lofty look of unconcern, as if to signify that he was accustomed to meet all sorts of people and to listen to all sorts of twaddle by flighty or ill-balanced persons, he announced that he knew what he wanted in the *Sunday Star* and proposed to stand by his policy.

"Then you'd better get another man to carry out your policy," Manning said, rising from his chair, and he walked out of the directors' room.

Several directors exchanged uneasy glances. One of them said something about Manning's years of service to the paper. He had built up the circulation of the *Star*. He had given it prestige. The Sunday editor was too good a man to lose.

But McNaughton was obdurate. He was furious.

"No man is too good to lose," he shouted. "The day when a man was indispensable is over. Manning goes and his place shall be filled at once."

The next morning there appeared on the bulletin board a notice, signed by the publisher, announcing that "Mr. Manning having resigned, Mr. Bradford is now Sunday editor, and the staff is expected to regard him accordingly."

Bradford was one of the *Star's* privileged reporters. He was what was known as a "policy man." He was an expert when it came to writing a cynical or sneering story. And on the *Star* sneering stories took first rank.

For the *Star* had close affiliations with certain corporations. When a special privilege was wanted from the city council by one of these corporations and objection arose from one source or another, the paper immediately launched out upon a campaign of sneers and ridicule against the men who objected to the steal. Invariably such campaigns of ridicule resulted in victory for the corporation because they diverted the public mind from issues to cheap personal sneers and libels against certain men.

So Bradford, having for years served in the position of "policy reporter" and having helped put over "jokers" on the people, was placed in Manning's position. There was a double object in it. Not only was it to reward Bradford. His viewpoint, his attitude toward social questions, or rather lack of attitude, were considered essential now to undo the work of Manning. He could be relied upon to have no eye for

slums and problems. There would be no more "uncomfortable" stories in the Sunday paper.

Bradford began his duties as Sunday editor with a general overhauling of the staff. He called the writers into his office one by one. Some of them came out smiling. Others had a furtive look in their eyes.

He called Witte last.

"There are some stories I want you to take," Bradford said. The acquaintance between Witte and himself had been very casual. The Sunday editor now looked him over carefully, searchingly. Bradford's spoken instructions were to sidetrack Witte from his accustomed work and put him on general assignments. The unspoken instructions were to get rid of him.

It was policy with the *Star* not to "fire" reporters but to "let them out." There were various ways of letting a reporter see that his usefulness to the paper had waned and that his removing himself would be welcomed. This policy of not discharging employees was fostered by McNaughton, who cherished the idea of being a "benevolent" employer.

"We have had altogether too many distressing stories in the paper of late," Bradford continued. "There were some protests — from readers, I believe. Anyway from now on we want bright and snappy things in the Sunday paper. Suppose you try to get some humorous stories. Find, for instance, the largest family in Chicago — a man having thirty or forty

children. That would make a corking page. Another story you might get is about the girl that has had the most proposals of marriage. Get me also a story about the shop girl who has the prettiest feet in Chicago. . . ."

There was very little work done in the office that afternoon. The men sought out the nearest barroom and there discussed the "new king."

Witte took little interest in the discussions now. Since the days he had spent in the hospital with his wife and watched her go through the ordeal, her struggle against death, his job and office politics appeared small indeed. He felt guilty toward his wife. It was his fear, his helplessness in the arena of life, he said to himself, that had urged Helen on to take chances with death.

In the office meantime the work of disintegrating the staff was begun. Two new men were brought in by Bradford. One of them was to be his assistant, the other a rewrite man. An uneasy expression appeared on the faces of several members of the staff. Somebody would have to leave—

At the end of the week the Sunday editor called in a Mr. Lane, a member of the *Star's* staff for several years, and informed him that henceforth he would be put on space. He would be paid for as many stories as the paper would use. Lane resigned.

"I guess it is my turn next," Witte thought and

was vaguely planning what he would do. Bradford had already dropped several remarks about not caring for stories about the "foreign scum" and the "tenement trash."

"There is a letter for you in the mailbox," Norton woke him out of his reflections. The letter was from a Mr. Brinton, the editor of a new magazine started in Chicago. Would Witte kindly come and see him at once?

Witte went. Brinton needed an article on a civic subject for the next issue. That would be a week hence. Could Witte have such an article in a week?

The article was finished four days later. The same afternoon Brinton called up to notify Witte that the article suited.

"It is just the thing," said the editor; "come and see me in the morning."

Brinton ordered two more articles from Witte "on social lines." They were ready in less than ten days. Witte was now waiting for a letter from Brinton. There might be some changes to make. They might even have to be rewritten. He was ready for it. After ten days the letter came. The editor was pleased with the articles. He might want to change here and there a phrase later on, but there would be no material changes. He inclosed a check for one hundred and five dollars for the three.

As Emil held the check between his trembling

fingers, his eyes filled with a haze. It was as if he had just received a commutation of a long prison sentence. For though he had for some weeks given every moment he could spare to the articles for Mr. Brinton, the changes that were being made or were pending in the office, had not escaped his attention. Several stories he had written were cut down by Bradford to one-third of their original length. Several other stories of his were killed in proof. Clearly he would have to be going soon. The check was his passport into the world —

It was the last day of March, but the breeze that evening was as mild as that of a May day. Witte not only walked home, but he took his coat off, and enjoyed every step he was taking — and planned his future. . . .

Without a word, with an air of reverence, Witte handed the check to Helen.

She gazed at the green slip of paper before her and then fixed her eyes upon her husband. There was a solemn look in Emil's face.

"What will it be next?" she asked.

"New York," he answered.

Quietly Witte opened the door into the Sunday editor's room. Bradford turned in his swivel chair, and perceiving the reporter, grinned icily. Witte, with-

out knowing why, thought of a fox as he gazed at Bradford's smooth-shaven, slick face.

"I came to pronounce my valedictory," he smiled in turn. "I want to give you two weeks' notice. I shall leave at the end of that time."

The icy grin disappeared from Bradford's lips. Witte had stolen a march on him. He had resigned and deprived him, Bradford, of the pleasure of freezing him out. . . .

"Got a job, I presume," Bradford said bluntly.

"No," Witte replied. "I have not tried to get a job here. I am going to New York."

The Sunday editor started slightly. In his heart of hearts he had faith in Manning's judgment and respected Manning's choice of men. And Manning not only had chosen, but so consistently stood by Witte — Bradford knew that far better than Witte.

"I am sorry you are going," Bradford ended a silence that was becoming awkward. "I am sure you will make good there. Anything I can do for you — don't hesitate to ask me."

The announcement that Witte was going to New York created a respectful atmosphere in the office toward him. One older member of the staff spoke regretfully of his own lost opportunities. He, too, should have gone to New York at a certain point in his career. Several of the younger writers talked

wistfully of the day when they, too, would leave for the metropolis. . . . Witte was much in demand now. Everybody was glad to split a bottle of beer with him and to express confidence in his ability to make good in New York. . . .

He wrote a letter full of tenderness to his parents. His finances did not permit his coming home to say good-by to them. But he hoped to spend his vacation with them in the near future — perhaps in a year. He would come to see them at the first opportunity. His going away to New York, he feared, would be a blow to them. They would find it hard to reconcile themselves to it.

To his surprise the attitude of his parents was the very opposite. They were glad he was going to New York. They had confidence in his ability to make good there, boundless confidence. And when he made good — who could tell but what they might join him in the great metropolis. . . .

Here his father's letter grew intimate and subdued. Not only his mother, Masha, but he, Aaron, too, would like to leave Spring Water. . . . They would like to join Emil in New York. . . . They were getting old. He, Aaron, was not as strong as formerly. . . . The life of a pedler was becoming too hard for him. In a city he might find some lighter work. And he would be among his people — among Jews — They longed

to be among Jews again. It was hard to spend one's declining years among "goyim" (Gentiles).

Parental blessing and repeated confidence in him closed the missive which acted as a depressant on Witte the rest of the day and evening.

They ate their last supper in silence. . . . Helen quickly disposed of the dishes. She put them away in the improvised little closet in their screened kitchen, ready for use by the next couple that should move into "their" rooms. . . . The trunks had already been packed — the landlady notified. In the morning Helen would move into another room. She had already got back her job with Mr. Altman and would go to work as soon as Emil left —

It was still light, and they sat by the window looking out upon the street which with the breath of spring was assuming new life. Their shoulders touched, but they avoided looking at each other, for each sensed the tears in the other's eyes. . . .

They could repress themselves no longer. . . . The tears came with a rush. . . . As if seeking protection against the overpowering emotions, they held each other in passionate embrace and wept on each other's shoulders.

It was past midnight when sleep finally relaxed their tense nerves and made an end of their whispered con-

fidences. At the break of day, however, Emil was awake. He raised the shade slightly and in the pale morning light he watched Helen's even breathing. There was a faint flush in her cheek. She looked almost like a child to him — and she was so pathetically lonely. A great sorrow seized him. He was leaving her alone without money, without friends, without a protector. . . . It was cruel, cruel of him to leave her, cruel of the world to separate husband and wife for the sake of bread. . . .

He took her soft hands in his and covered them with kisses. . . . She opened her eyes. There was a blurred smile in them. She had been awakened in the midst of a pleasant dream. She nestled up close to him, twined her arms about his neck and was asleep again in an instant. . . .

CHAPTER XVI

LETTERS — AND MORE LETTERS

WITTE had fortified himself with letters to New York editors before leaving Chicago. One of these was to the editor of the *Advance,* Mr. Howard Charles Thornton. It was written by an old chum of Thornton's, a copy reader on the Chicago *Star.*

"So, you know Priestley," the editor eyed Witte sympathetically. Thornton was fond of the old copy reader in Chicago. The two had worked side by side for many years. Priestley was considered by far the brighter man. It was Thornton's fortune, however, to be pushed upward wherever he worked. Priestley stood in one place.

They talked about Chicago. Thornton recalled his own days in the newspaper field with a feeling not unlike that with which men speak of their boyhood days. He was a man past forty-five and had been out of newspaper work for twelve years. He mentioned several editors, but Witte did not know them. A new generation had come and gone since Thornton left.

"Priestley," the editor said, assuming a business tone, "tells me that you come here to do magazine

work. What do you intend to confine yourself to — fiction or articles?"

"Articles, fiction — both," said Witte. "I'll try my hand at everything."

"Yes, that is the best way," Thornton nodded.

After a pause he asked bluntly:

"How are you fixed financially?"

Witte told him he had thirty-five dollars in his pocket.

The editor winced at the young man's inexperience.

"I would suggest," he said, "that you try to connect up with some newspaper here. You don't want, of course, to take a regular job, if you aim to do magazine work, but you ought to get some special work to do. Magazine writing is a precarious business in the beginning. You ought to try and make your living through the newspapers, as a free lance. You ought to have no trouble selling stuff to the Sunday papers."

With this Mr. Thornton dismissed Witte, after urging him to submit his stories or articles to him as soon as they were written.

"Do you know Mr. Merrick of the *Universe?*" Thornton asked as Witte was about to leave. "Merrick is a Chicago man. Better go up and see him. Tell him I sent you to him. He is a good man to know."

At the end of two days Witte had rounded up the half dozen editors to whom he had introductions.

The third day was Saturday. He "pitched his tent," as he wrote Helen, in a room on East Fifteenth Street, and put in the same evening in writing a feature which he had observed during the day. A Sunday paper, he thought, would take it. He worked on it all Sunday morning. In the afternoon he wrote to Helen.

". . . It is three o'clock," he wrote in part. "The street is teeming with people dressed in their best. Even in the ghetto, a part of which I can see by looking out of my window, every one seems to be observing Sunday. There is a whole afternoon and evening ahead of me. It is the first Sunday afternoon and evening without you. I don't count all the Sundays I spent before I knew you. They have been obliterated by your presence. All I remember is the joyful Sundays we spent together — When I think of having to spend the next twenty or twenty-five weeks without you — as things are shaping themselves now I cannot expect to have you here much sooner — when I think of being away from you all that time, I feel all energy escape me. Yet this must not be. I must have my energies keyed to the highest, as this, and this alone, can bring nearer the day of your coming to me. . . ."

". . . My impressions of New York," he wrote in another letter, "are mixed. It holds me spell-bound at times, and then again it horrifies me. Was it Heine who said 'I am a tragedy, I am a comedy'? New

York might appropriately take this for its motto, emblazon it over its skyscrapers. It is everything in one. It is a beast, it is a God. It is in one breath the most American city in the United States, and yet the most foreign city in America. The squalor of the old world and the genius of the new are often housed within a block of each other. The flower of the nation's intellect and the ebb of humanity pass each other on the street, rub shoulders with one another in street cars. . . ."

"Unsettled as I am," he wrote on another occasion, "I am still settled in a rut. My free lance newspaper articles give me a living, and no more, and the magazine articles keep coming back, with polite regrets from editors. Three months have passed and still I have not landed; still your coming is as far off as on the first day I came here. . . . It is becoming intolerable — I suffocate for want of you —"

His next letter was a pæan of triumph. A story of his had been accepted by the *Universe*. The clouds were clearing, and the sun was breaking. It was the beginning of further successes. He had three more stories traveling among magazines. Soon he would be in a position to send for her. . . .

Within the next two weeks, however, every one of the stories came back with a personal note of regret from the editor or a reader of the magazine. . . . It

was not a bad story, but — in every case there was the same "but" — the story did not suit the needs of the magazine.

He had become friendly with the assistant editor of one of the magazines, a young man recently out of Harvard. The latter explained to him why his stories, though the editors honestly thought them good, were not accepted.

"You no doubt remember the rôle of the Fates in Greek mythology," the assistant editor, Jennings, said to him. "What the Fates had spun, even the Gods could not unravel. Before the Fates Olympus itself was helpless.

"The editors are in much the same position. Each magazine has set up a certain standard. It has made up its mind to appeal to a certain class of the public. It has therefore decided upon a certain kind of story that it wants. Your stories are good, but they do not happen to fit the needs of the magazine as we see them, or think them. In this case the editor is helpless. What he likes to read personally is not always the stuff he dares give to his readers —"

Several weeks later the check for his first story came from the *Universe*. It was a check for sixty-five dollars. Witte looked at it long and mournfully. There were stories current not only among the public, but among newspaper men as well, that short stories

were prize articles. Fabulous sums were being paid to short story writers. O. Henry was getting a thousand dollars for two or three pages. . . .

His own thirty-five dollars with which he had come to New York, had been reduced to only twenty, in spite of the jealous guard he kept over it. Working on his stories, he often neglected his bread and butter stuff for the newspapers and had to draw an occasional dollar from the bank. Eighty-five dollars, then, was what he had at the end of five months in New York upon which to attempt to build a nest in the metropolis for Helen. But before the nest could be feathered even on the installment plan, Helen's fare to New York had to be paid. . . . She might even have to have a suit. . . . She never said anything in her letters about clothes, but he knew how much she was earning. . . .

He sat for a long time, held fast in his chair by a sick, dizzy feeling. . . . Twilight had come and gone and now night was spreading her black, heavy wings over the city. . . .

He went down into the street and lingered long at the table in the restaurant, paying no heed to the annoyed look on the head waiter's face, which seemed to say: "Why don't you pay your bill and go?"

At last he went out into the street again.

The sky, which had been bright and starry when Witte entered the restaurant, was now leaden. A

wind was raising the dust from the street and sending it up in clouds. He strolled aimlessly.

A fine rain began to sprinkle. Unconsciously he welcomed it. He increased his pace. The more the rain penetrated his clothes, the further it seemed to remove him from the tormenting thoughts which had held him fast that afternoon and the early part of the evening, since he had received the check. His troubles now seemed remote, as if they concerned some one else, not him. He forgot the petty worries of the day and feasted his eyes on the scenes in the streets. . . The city was teeming with stories. . . . Some day when he had made his name he would force the editors to accept the stories he was now seeing — not make him look for stories that they want. . . . Some day, some day — All his life he had been living with that "some day" in view, and still the words seemed as full of freshness and hope to him as ever. . . .

At Broadway and Forty-second he was caught in a whirl of humanity, which, in spite of the rain, had no thought of cutting its pleasure short. He walked briskly and presently found himself near Columbus Circle. He turned back.

He stopped in front of the *Times* Building and looked up at the seventeenth floor. He knew that floor. He had been up there a number of times. It was alive with activity now. It was twelve o'clock.

The first edition of the paper had already gone to press. It seemed to him he could smell lead — the odor of the composing room. The tips of his fingers felt as if they had just come in touch with a wet proof — drops of rain had trickled down on them from his coat. It reminded him that he was getting wet.

He strolled down Seventh Avenue. The rain was gaining strength. Here and there in the streets pools were forming. He increased his pace. At Thirty-Fourth Street he would strike a car.

A dark form, a woman, suddenly slipped out from a hallway.

"Lonesome, Buddy?" And the dark form fell in line with Witte. She turned a smiling face on him. She was young, very young. Through the paint on her cheeks and penciled eyebrows innocence was fighting hard to come to the surface.

"It is so wet and I am so uncomfortable," she lisped. She adjusted her umbrella to make room under it for Witte. "My shoes are soaked through and my feet are wet."

It seemed as if she were confiding her troubles to a brother.

"Gee," she continued," I am so hungry, I could eat a steak as big as my head." She tried to gain Witte's eye. "Won't you come and buy me a steak? I know a nice restaurant around the corner."

Witte stopped abruptly, and looking her squarely in the face, said:

"How long is it since you saw your mother, girlie?"

The girl moved away a few steps, as if stung.

"You think you're funny, don't you?" she said, still moving backward. There was a gleam of resentment in her painted features. Her anger made her appear more natural. It heightened the look of innocence about her. It seemed unbelievable that she was one of the "women" the world never mentioned without scorn. The "slush, slush" of her torn shoes reached Witte's ears.

"Wait," he called back. He fished out a dollar from his pocket. "Here, buy yourself a steak."

The girl took the dollar and looked at it to make sure that it was real money.

"We can both eat on that," she said, her voice softening. "Come along, why don't you?"

Were it not for her painted cheeks and eyebrows, the hour of the night, or rather morning, and the certainty of the girl's "profession," she might have been taken for a high school girl, who was coaxing a boy classmate to taste of the candy she had herself made and threatening to be insulted if he refused.

Witte had started off. When he reached his room he opened the window wide and lighted the gas. Except for the light in a restaurant a block away the street was deserted. The sky was clearing up. The

stars came out and a breeze, cooled and refreshed by the rain, swept up from the East River and zigzagged its way through the tenements. The weariness, which had befallen him in the car, had disappeared with the removal of his wet clothes. He sat down at the table and wrote Helen a long letter, informing her of the decision that was born within him that evening.

The next three days he haunted the newspaper offices in search of a job. The search of work, however, netted him nothing.

"It is a tough game getting a job in this town," a reporter he knew warned him. "They will take a story if you have one, but if you want a job on the staff you have to force them to give it to you. If you have letters, they at least give you a personal hearing. That is worth something."

The next morning Witte went to see the editor of the *Advance*. Mr. Thornton was out of town, but his secretary, Miss Graves, to whom Witte had talked on several occasions, came out.

He told her in a few words of his decision to go back to newspaper work and to wait for a more auspicious opportunity in the magazine field.

"I wanted to ask Mr. Thornton if he could not give me letters to some of the editors in town. It is hard to get to them otherwise," he said.

"Yes, I know," the girl agreed, "and Mr. Thorn-

ton would be very glad to introduce you to some of the editors, I'm sure. Suppose you wait until next Monday, He will surely be back then. Can you wait that long?"

Witte smiled. Of course he would wait. Miss Graves lingered for a moment, and Witte sensed that the young woman wanted to say something else, but held back. They said "Good day" to each other, and he walked out.

Thornton was busy Monday. He told Witte, however, that he would write the letters of introduction for him at the first opportunity and that Miss Graves would mail them to him.

Two days later he received a packet containing half a dozen letters to as many editors of different papers written by Mr. Thornton. Inclosed was a note from Miss Graves transmitting these letters and expressing the hope that they would be of value to him.

She added casually:

"If these letters fail to anchor anything immediately, you might call on my brother, George Graves, on the *Evening Bulletin.* He is telegraph editor there. I have already talked to him about you."

Thornton's letters to the editors brought in every case a handshake and a few moments' conversation. But there were no jobs open then. Witte was told to call around again. Perhaps something would turn up.

He went to see Miss Graves' brother on the *Bulletin*

as a last resort. The telegraph editor sent word down for Witte to wait half an hour, until he got through working. Witte's heart leaped up for joy at this informal and brisk answer. There was no chilling politeness here. It was like a soldier talking to a brother soldier.

"Whew," said Graves, shaking hands with Witte, "this telegraph room is an inferno. They keep us cooped up in it like hens. Let's go out and get a breath of air."

What had impressed Witte most about Miss Graves on his various visits to Thornton's office was her evident high breeding. In her manner she was simple and democratic, yet she walked like a queen. Her features were delicate and yet there was a deliberateness in them. Her bearing, the way she bowed or smiled, bespoke great culture and refinement. The same air of refinement characterized her brother, George Graves.

"Let's go out to the water front," the latter said. "One feels so much freer by the water. No wonder stories about the sea never lose their interest!"

The two, walking side by side, presented a strange contrast. Graves with his cane and dark-rimmed glasses looked every inch the New England Yankee that he was. Witte looked decidedly plebeian in his baggy clothes.

"My sister told me about the fight you have been

making to get into the magazines," Graves said, "and that you want to get back to newspaper work for a while."

Witte told him of his experience with editors while job hunting.

"Yes," said Graves, "I suppose it is hard for the outsider. I myself have never been away from New York and have never thought much how difficult it is for an outsider to get in here."

"I shall talk to Mr. Milne within the next two or three days," he added. "Mr. Milne is the managing editor. I think he will make room for you."

Two days later Witte received a telegram from Graves to call on him that same afternoon at two o'clock. He introduced him to Milne, but the managing editor talked to him only a moment and turned him over to the city editor, Mr. Bogart. The latter asked Witte a few perfunctory questions and told him to come to work the next morning.

He wrote a long letter to Helen full of cheer and hope and expectancy. They would be reunited in a month.

CHAPTER XVII

THE END OF A DREAM

WINTER had come and gone. One by one the tenement houses were yielding themselves up to spring. At first the older children were allowed to play marbles in the streets. Then even babies were permitted to taste the balmy air of the last days of March. Windows, which had been shut tightly all winter long, were now raised.

Helen sat by the open window of their flat in a "model" tenement building and looked out upon the street. It was Sunday morning. Breakfast was done, and it was still too early to worry about dinner. The book she had meant to read lay beside her, half opened. She was not reading. Emil was glancing through the Sunday papers, jabbing his pencil here and there at a story which interested him, and which he meant to read later.

Helen sighed.

"You look worried," Emil said, observing his wife's face.

"Just spring," Helen explained. "Spring always makes me melancholy."

"I wonder," she added after a silence, "if we are ever again going to have such a winter."

Emil tried to laugh away her fears.

"You are a Jew through and through," he chided her jokingly. "You cannot enjoy the fleeting moment. You must worry, doubt. A strange trait this is in our race."

Helen listened fondly. She loved to listen to Emil.

"I presume it is only natural," Witte added, speaking slowly, as if to himself. "Two thousand years of wanderings and migrations, dotted heavily with persecution, with sudden calamities coming as if from the clear sky, implant in men a certain cautiousness, a feeling that fortune is fickle and may turn traitor at any moment."

Both were silent for a time.

They had indeed spent a happy winter. They were happier in New York than they had been in Chicago. Why? The answer lies in the one unwritten chapter of modern psychology —"The Psychology of the Job." Thanks to the interest of Graves, Witte was given consideration on the New York *Bulletin*. His stories found a ready response. They were given plenty of space and good display. The managing editor had taken notice of him on several occasions. He was often given the leading story of the day. With the importance of the stories he was doing, his own importance rose.

The cheerful atmosphere of the office found a ready echo in his home life. A month after he had secured the job on the *Bulletin,* Helen came. His salary on the paper was such that in three weeks' time he had saved sufficient to cover her traveling expenses and the necessary clothes. In one of the model tenements that were springing up in certain parts of New York he found an apartment that fitted in splendidly with his scheme of things. Rent was paid there by the week. No lease was required. The tenants were given all around freedom and considerable convenience. One of the stores that make a specialty of feathering such nests, furnished their three rooms at convenient installment rates.

Once more delightful evenings came and Sundays. They went out a good deal. They saw the town and observed the people. He surrendered himself entirely to the duties of the office and the pleasures of his home. Yes, it was the pleasantest winter they had spent. In spite of his efforts to allay the doubts of his wife, Witte, too, was affected by her simple question whether they would have another such happy winter. Would they? Fortune was fickle.

He made an end to the gloomy meditations proposing that they ride out to Staten Island to see the awakening of spring in the country. They left the house with the air of children leaving school to enjoy themselves the rest of the day as they will —

The summer proved even more delightful than the winter. Life was indeed kind to Helen —

Early in September Emil received a letter from Mr. Thornton of the *Advance*. The editor asked Witte to call on him the following afternoon with regard to an article he wanted him to do.

Thornton was very cordial. He was glad, he said, Witte was doing so well on the *Bulletin* — Miss Graves told him of his success there. He then explained to him the character of the article he wanted. Witte plunged into work.

By the middle of December the article was ready and he submitted it. He expected an answer by New Year, but Mr. Thornton had left the city for the Christmas holidays. Miss Graves informed him that no decision would, in all likelihood, be reached on the article before the middle of January. A lot of work always piled up after the holidays.

Meantime Witte was thinking of his parents. The letters from his father were becoming more plaintive. The life of a pedler, Aaron wrote in his last, was becoming physically impossible for him. He could no longer go out into the country for a week at a stretch. Business was slowing up. Could he find something to do in New York? There were so many Jews there Could he buy a little store in the ghetto and eke out an existence? They were old and did not need much.

And if they sold out everything in Spring Water they would have about five hundred dollars. Would that give them a living? They would be satisfied with any kind of a living, only to be near him — and among Jews.

His father's letter touched Emil deeply, Aaron and Masha were on the verge of sixty. They were old. He had meant to be their support in old age. What a poor support he was!

Helen agreed with him that it was time for his parents to come to New York. New York would be Emil's permanent home henceforth. He was making friends there in a business way. He was getting to be known. The nearness of his parents would materially add to their happiness.

The next letter to his parents was full of hope. There was no use disturbing things during the winter, Emil wrote. But after the Passover, in the spring, they would move to New York. By that time, too, he, Emil, might save a small capital. If he sold the article to the *Advance* he would have considerable extra money. He could merge his little capital with his parents', if need be, and help them establish themselves in a business way.

The answer from his father was one exalted cry.

"Mother," Aaron wrote, "made me read over the letter to her many times." They were impatient for

the winter to pass. . . . They would begin to dispose of things at once. . . . They were counting the days when they would be reunited with their son in New York. . . .

The article was accepted by Thornton, and immediately following the announcement of the acceptance a check for two hundred dollars. With the one hundred and fifty that they had in the bank Emil and Helen felt themselves rich. They now took occasional strolls through the lower East Side "with an eye to business." They were scanning the streets for some fitting little store for his parents.

A week before the Passover Emil wrote a letter to his father with final instructions for the journey. It was eleven o'clock in the evening when he finished the letter. The last collection of the mail at the box around the corner was at eleven-thirty. Emil hastened down the four flights of stairs to mail it.

A messenger boy was scanning the cards in the hallway. Witte was about to pass him, but changed his mind. He asked the messenger whom he was looking for. The latter showed him the name on the telegram. It was addressed to himself.

Witte tore open the envelope and took in the brief, crisp line at a glance. It said: "Mother died in four hours from apoplectic stroke." It was signed, "Alex Stein."

It was only two years before Mrs. Witte's death that the Jews of Spring Water had purchased a piece of land a short distance from the public cemetery and consecrated a burial ground of their own. But when the first funeral was held, the tragedy of death yielded in bitter poignancy to the grewsomeness of a lonely grave. The first to die was a woman. When she was brought to the cemetery and her grown children perceived the lonely grave in the midst of the field, a shudder ran through them. A daughter fainted and a son, crazed with grief, attempted to stop the funeral. He finally yielded to the entreaties of the older men, sobbing all the while: "It is cruel, cruel, to bury a woman in such a lonely grave in a far-away land."

Everybody wept. On the way home Mrs. Witte took her husband's hand, and gulping down her tears, spoke:

"If anything happens to me, Aaron, I want you to take me to N——. I want to be buried among Jews. . . . I have been lonely — among strangers — all my life. . . ."

Aaron upbraided her for talking "such nonsense." Nevertheless it was understood between them that if anything happened to either of them, the other was to take her, or him, to N—— for burial.

It was to N—— that Emil went to meet the earthly remains of his mother. It was a drizzly morning when he tumbled out of the train, red-eyed, his clothes

crumpled and his face covered with a three days' beard. He had taken no sleeper. He could not think of sleeping, much less of sleeping in comfort, at such a time. . . . His father, Harry and Clara were at the house of a friend. They were awaiting his arrival. Alex had been there, but had returned to Spring Water, and was to be summoned by telegram when Emil arrived.

As he entered he overheard his father's voice. Aaron was talking to a countryman of theirs, discussing a passage in the Talmud relating to life after death. The discussion was not heated, but his father spoke with considerable firmness about immortality. Emil observed his father's eyes an instant before the latter saw him and he was struck by their peculiar brilliancy.

Everybody crowded about him. Clara sobbed and moaned. Harry inquired after his journey and tried to talk commonplaces but his tongue moved with difficulty and his eyes would not stay dry. Aaron alone maintained a semblance of poise, of calmness, but it was a strange poise. His chin trembled several times as if it were detached from the rest of his face. . . . He urged the daughter to see that they prepared something to eat for Emil — he must be hungry after such a long journey. Then he fussed with Emil's overcoat and suitcase, changing them from place to place. . . .

Masha had died on a Wednesday night. In view of

Emil's insistence that they wait with the funeral for him, it had to be postponed till Sunday. The Jewish undertaker in the N—— ghetto, to whom the body was shipped from Spring Water, had no proper accommodations to keep it that length of time. He suggested to Aaron that the city morgue was the only place where the body could be kept in a proper temperature.

Aaron knew little about the significance of a morgue and consented to everything the undertaker said. Later when his children, and especially Alex Stein, learned where the body had been taken, they raved. Still there was nothing to be done. There was no other Jewish undertaker in town. And the morgue, if not from a sentimental, at least from a religious standpoint, seemed preferable to a Christian undertaking establishment.

The fact that his mother's body was at the morgue was broken to Emil cautiously. Nevertheless a shudder of indignation ran through him. As a reporter in N—— he had been to the morgue on two or three occasions. The thought of his mother's coffin lying alongside of nameless dead had something humiliating, horrifying in it. However, he gained control over his feelings and, after making a pretense at eating breakfast, he started off in the company of his father and his brother for the morgue.

When Emil requested to see his mother's body, the

attendant began to grumble. Could he not wait until they took her away for burial? It was not strictly in accordance with the rules to open the vaults to visitors. Had it been the body of some one who did not concern him personally that he wanted to see, Emil would have known how to silence objections and gain his point. As it was, however, he listened helplessly to the stubborn drawl of the sluggish attendant. Finally he found his voice.

"I came all the way from New York here to see her," he said hoarsely, "over a thousand miles. I won't be long —"

Witte's discomfitured attitude must have flattered the morgue keeper's vanity. Apparently he had shown the young man before him his power and now he would show his generosity. He motioned to Emil to follow him into the next room. There without much effort he rolled the coffin out half-way from a vault and removed the lid.

Emil lifted a cloth and beheld his mother's face, which was beginning to turn blue. In death, too, his mother had that same submissive and resigned look which he had always seen in her face during her lifetime. He bent down on his knees and felt her hand and face. They were hard — frozen.

"Enough, Emil," his father touched his shoulder after some time. . . .

On the way home Aaron related to him the details

of his mother's death. As she was setting the table for supper she became dizzy. He brought her a glass of water. She took a sip of it, and swayed in the chair. She did not regain consciousness any more.

It was a long ride through a slow-falling rain to the cemetery. There were half a dozen people besides the Witte family in the cortège. They were all old friends and countrymen of the Wittes. There is a simple and somewhat hurried dignity about an orthodox Jewish funeral. The undertaker opened up the coffin and adjusted the body. He then produced a little sack of earth from Palestine and strewed a handful of it sparingly over the face of the deceased — a symbol of the longing of the orthodox Jew for the land of his ancestors, of faithfulness to it even unto death.

Just before the coffin was lowered Aaron bent over his wife's body. He uncovered her face, and looking at it, began to speak to her — asking her forgiveness, which is a custom among Jews. If he had ever offended her . . . if he had ever been rude or inattentive; Aaron lisped, he now begged of her not to carry the earthly feeling of resentment with her into the next world — either toward him or any one else.

Clara overheard her father's words and fainted. The undertaker, who was on the lookout for just such a scene, took a hand in the matter and began to expedite things. The body was lowered. Half a

dozen spades seemed to have risen from nowhere, and the grave was rapidly filling up with wet clay.

Emil watched the coffin disappear from view and the grave fill up on a level with the ground. Then a little mound rose over it. He stood and looked at it like a stone figure until the sexton gave him a sharp pull by the sleeve.

The sexton placed Emil alongside of his brother Harry. They formed the center of a little group. He and his brother were handed a framed parchment upon which was inscribed the " Kadosh," the prayer for the dead.

As a child, when Witte was still in Russia, he had seen little orphans lined up near the altar in the synagogue morning and evening, reciting the " Kadosh."

As these orphans chanted the prayer they were invariably watched by the entire congregation. In the streets these little children might be ignored, but in the synagogue they commanded respect. For here they were doing duty by their dead. They prayed for them. That invested them with much dignity in the eyes of the onlookers, with much importance.

The sing-song in which the prayer is recited now came to Emil as if he had heard it only yesterday. The words came to him clearly, naturally. . . . Of course the prayer meant nothing to him any longer. It was far removed from his own religious convictions, or perhaps lack of convictions. But he recited these

words feelingly. For he knew that could his mother see him standing there, reciting the "Kadosh" over her grave, it would have made her immensely happy. . . . She had so feared that her sons would dispense with the "Kadosh," would consider the prayer too old-fashioned in this busy, American world. . . .

Aaron insisted on celebrating the Passover, which was two days off, at home, and immediately after the funeral they took the train for Spring Water. He insisted that his children gather at his house. None of the children found voice to oppose him. It was evident that he was trying to postpone his leave-taking from family life, from a home of his own, for another few days. It was too much to break away all at once.

He solemnized Passover Eve in the wonted manner. He recited the story of Israel's exodus from Egypt in the same triumphant sing-song in which he had recited it ever since he sat at the head of the table — which was nearly forty years. Several times, however, he looked to his right where his wife was wont to sit, as if expecting her to hand him this or the other glass, or dish, in accordance with the rites of the "Seder." But Masha was not there to assist him. Once or twice there was a tremor in Aaron's voice as he recited. A sharp memory flitted across his brain. But the tremor lasted only an instant and he was himself again. The

forced composure of the old man — Aaron was nearly all white now — only heightened the sense of horror of their loss. . . .

In the course of the next few days, when Aaron thought no one saw him, he walked from room to room, searched every nook and cranny, picked up a piece of cotton or a needle and looked at it long. Once Emil found his father in the clothes-closet smoothing Masha's garments tenderly, wiping a fleck of dust here and there, as if expecting that she would return any moment and would wear them once more.

It was with great effort that Emil brought himself to speak of his father's future. He wanted Aaron to go with him to New York. But the latter shook his head negatively. He would feel better in Spring Water. It was nearer to N——. He could run out there occasionally, and visit. . . . He would stay with Clara.

The next morning Emil took the train for New York.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE PROMISE

THE wound was slow in healing. His mother's death had become the pivot about which his thoughts revolved. Everything began and ended with it. In the morning, when he awoke, he said to himself that this was the twenty-ninth or the thirty-fifth day since she had died. Going up in the elevator to the office he saw a girl holding a bunch of lilacs — May had already come — and this suggested to him that his mother would never more enjoy the sight of a flower. In City Hall Park the grass looked especially green and fresh — and his mind wandered to his mother's grave. Was grass growing on it already?

Deep down in his heart there was a gnawing reproach — he should have succeeded sooner. His mother would perhaps still be living if he had. Her loneliness, her longing for him, and worry over his unsettled existence, might have hastened her death. . . . What did success avail now? She would never see it. She would never more be proud of him. . . .

Nevertheless it was success that made him forget his great loss for any length of time. Now more than

ever he felt like writing. He craved stories with consuming tragedy in them. To write such stories gave him pleasure; to draw a picture which would make the reader gasp for breath was real happiness.

And such stories now came his way — or perhaps he went out of his way in search of them. He wrote in succession three or four pathetic pieces of which every one in the office took notice.

The more pathos he put into the stories he wrote, the more his own pain was stilled. To ruminate over the sorrows and tragedies which came to his desk in skeletonized reports from police courts and morgues and almshouses, was to detract unconsciously from the poignancy of his own grief. He was not the only one to suffer from the cruelty and capriciousness of fate.

One day the realization came to him that in his grief for the dead he was committing a grievous injustice toward the living. He had neglected his wife. Ever since he had come back from Spring Water Helen had tended to him as if he were a sick child. She left him alone with his great sadness whenever he wanted to be alone. Yet she was always there to see that he got every comfort possible. She took his long hours of silence, his craving for seclusion, patiently and without a murmur.

It was while he was sitting in the office and listening to the rumbling of the press below that these thoughts about his wife came to him. As if awakening from a

long sleep he suddenly realized what the two months, which he had lived in a sort of trance, must have meant to Helen. He became hot all over. Shame and pity diffused through his brain and heart. He wished the day were over and he could rush home and tell Helen how guilty he felt toward her, how dear she was to him.

Helen, meantime, was standing beside the small fireplace, upon which their dinner was cooking, sunk in reveries. She had felt happier that day than she had felt in a long time. She could not give any reason for her feeling thus. It was just a singing of the heart which comes and goes as it pleases. She tried to give expression to her happiness in the meal she was making for the evening. She thought of the dishes Emil was especially fond of and was preparing them.

She looked at the clock. It was five-thirty, the hour Emil usually came. She ran to the mirror to tidy herself. Her cheeks were burning red from work and excitement. . . . Once or twice she looked out of the window, but she did not see him coming. Then, just as she was getting her mind off him for a moment and beginning to manœuver one of the pots which was in danger of burning, there was an abortive ring of the bell, and in half the usual time she heard Emil's rapid, clambering footsteps. He was evidently running up the stairs. She opened the door and stood there flushed and smiling. waiting for him. He too was

flushed, and out of breath from running. His eyes had a liquid brilliance and on his lips there was a smile which had been missing for months.

He clasped her in his arms and held her with such a vehemence as if he were defending his right to her against a thousand hands that were stretching out to separate them. . . .

The summer was drawing to a close, and Emil determined to make the most of the few Sundays that were left.

"Suppose you meet me at four o'clock this afternoon and we will take a ride to Rockaway Beach," he suggested to Helen as he started to go to work one Saturday morning.

Helen reflected a moment and declined to come out.

"Better come home when you get through," she said, "and we will go out around here. I am not quite well to-day."

Emil gave her a worried look. He had noticed that she had grown paler.

"Don't look so alarmed," she smiled back. "It is not anything serious, I just don't feel quite right. Maybe I will change my mind later, and we will go to Rockaway Beach after all."

He was uneasy about Helen all morning. In the afternoon he looked at his watch every ten minutes. If only a good story would come his way, a story that

would absorb him and take his mind off his own affairs for some time. But there were no big stories breaking. It was a quiet Saturday. The copy readers were letting items run long, for there was nothing of importance coming in for the late editions to make room for.

The suspense worried him. He climbed the steps to the elevated heavily. As he approached the house he looked up to see if Helen was at the window. She was not there. She came to the door, however.

She had been lying on the couch in the sitting-room, which was also Emil's workroom, though he had not worked much since his mother's death. She went back to the couch and lay down. Emil sat beside her. He pressed her hand. Her face suddenly became crimson.

"You are sick," he said, worried.

She turned her eyes away from him and began to cry softly.

He looked puzzled.

"Is there any bad news?" he asked. "From home? From your folks — from Russia?"

She shook her head negatively.

He took her head in his hands and kissed her hair. She curled up and leaned against his breast.

"Emil."

He looked into her face quickly. There was suspense, almost fear in his eyes. That amused her. She laughed.

"You poor boy," she said, "you remember you asked me. . . . Well, it has come. . . . You are going to be a father."

"I could not tell you this in the morning," she said when she had freed herself from his passionate embraces, "because I could not bear to be away from you all day after having told you."

They did not go out. For hours they sat talking in tender whispers about their unborn child and all that he would mean to them, the great void he would fill in their existence, the zest he would add to his, Emil's work.

Yes, he could work again now. The spell of inactivity was broken. The feeling of futility which had torn his soul since his mother's death had disappeared.

He forgot what it was to brood about death. He was dreaming of life. . . .

CHAPTER XIX

HELEN DIES

THE physician figured that it would be an April baby.

"You were a trifle hasty," he said with a twinkle. "The most convenient time for a baby to come into the world — from the baby's point of view — is in the last part of May or early in June. The unsteady spring weather is over by that time. It begins to get warm, and little babies like little birds want warmth. They like the sun."

Dr. Ochsner was one of the pioneers of the Russian Jewish colony in New York. His name was not known to the medical world, though he was a well-educated, conscientious physician. His interests lay not so much in the direction of scientific medicine as in the social problems which his practice on the East Side unraveled before his eyes daily.

He was a freqent contributor to certain Yiddish journals of socialistic tendencies.

"Yes," Dr. Ochsner continued, "babies need sunshine. That is the principal trouble with our babies

in New York — they live away from the sun. Our landlords put a ban on sunshine in their tenement houses. They value space far too much to 'waste' it. Why admit Old Sol free when you can let in a boarder in a windowless bedroom for six dollars a month? The ancients worshiped the sun. Would that we too learned to worship the sun, instead of worshiping the Almighty Dollar!"

"Is this your first baby?" the physician asked.

Helen and Emil exchanged a swift look and both said, "Yes." Dr. Ochsner observed the expression in their faces and made a mental note of their "Yes."

Just before Christmas Witte got an offer from the editor of the *Morning Leader* to go to work for that paper. He sought out Graves and asked his advice.

"Accept it," Graves said unhesitatingly. "Take it by all means. You will get a chance there to show yourself. You cannot write a good story on an afternoon paper. Everything has to be written in a hurry. The *Leader* will give you a chance to write."

Still Witte had his misgivings about accepting the job on account of Helen. In her delicate condition it was a great comfort to be at home evenings. On the *Leader* he would have to work until one in the morning.

Though Helen received the news with a slight pang, she did not show it. She did not falter an instant, but agreed with Graves that Emil must accept the job. He

must not throw aside anything in the way of advancement.

Even after Witte left the *Bulletin,* Graves' interest in him did not flag. On the contrary he was watching the reporter more eagerly than ever and was glad of every opportunity to be of help to him. Such opportunities came. While dining in the Press Club Graves saw West enter. West was the city editor of the *Leader.* He made room for him at his own table and much of the conversation during the meal centered about Witte.

It would be hard to explain what caused such deep attachment and interest to spring up in Graves for such an utter stranger as Witte. Perhaps the chief reason was that Graves was a bachelor in the forties and was completely free from domestic worries of any sort. He was not averse to having a protégé. His interest in Witte was stimulated, too, by his sister's telling him of the latter's untiring efforts at writing, in spite of all discouragements, in spite of continuous refusals by editors to accept his manuscript, which Miss Graves, as Mr. Thornton's secretary, was in a position to know.

Then, too, Witte's writing on the *Bulletin* was full of surprises.

" Witte's stories are different," the city editor of the *Bulletin* had once said to Graves. " What to another reporter would be a simple case of assault and battery, under Witte's research and investigation, grows into

human tragedy. Long forgotten causes, hidden family skeletons are dragged out into the light. He does not let the police and the coroner give him the news — he goes into the home, he digs into life. He finds the motive behind the crime, and the cause behind the sin."

This going behind the scenes in every story, the constant searching for motives and causes of crime and sin and misery, soon came to the surface on the *Leader*. Witte made the first page of the *Leader* frequently. A few of the stories he wrote were first-page stories to begin with and were deliberately assigned to him. But there were other stories of his on the first page not because they were in themselves so significant, but because of the manner in which they were written. The human touch in them forced them to the front.

"I like the way you handled the kid story this morning," West once said to him. "Keep on writing in this vein — that is, without regard to rules. I don't care whether you get the news in the first paragraph or in the last, provided the story is written in such a manner as to compel the reader to read it from beginning to end. Give yourself freedom in the matter of style. Write the way you think you ought to write, the way you feel like writing."

When Witte figured up his income at the end of two months he found that he had averaged fifty-eight dollars a week.

"And now let him come," he said, looking mis-

chievously at Helen. "I am ready for him. I can give him a fairly good reception."

Helen rejoined in the same mischievous vein: "It is going to be a girl. . . ."

"I want a girl," she continued with feigned sulkiness in her voice. "I am putting pink ribbon on all her dresses. I want a companion for Mamma. . . ."

"It is going to be a boy," Emil responded with mock firmness. "It cannot be helped, my dear. We just have to have a chubby boy in the family."

From the figures of his earnings Witte turned to the figures of his savings. They had over five hundred dollars in the bank and they felt very rich. Their child would not be born into want. . . .

Returning from work past midnight one night late in the month of March, Emil found Helen pacing up and down the floor in pain. She had been ill all evening. At first she could hardly take a step. But she was getting a trifle better. There was no need of calling a doctor at such an hour, but they would call him in the morning.

Dr. Ochsner came and examined the patient. He prescribed some medicine.

"You might telephone up to me to-morrow how you feel," he said before leaving. "I will come and see you again in two days, when I hear from the laboratory."

Helen divided the day between mental and physical anguish. For whenever she was ill the thought of home, her parents, her mother came to her with agonizing persistency. Frequently in such periods of mental and physical pain she would pen a letter to her parents asking them to come to America, to be near her. Invariably she tore such letters up with a feeling of shame. How could they leave Russia while her sister was immured in Siberia? How selfish of her to entertain such desires in the face of her sister's martyrdom!

But she pined for her parents and sister all the same. Oh, what a help her sister would have been to her now — in these circumstances. She sobbed softly as she thought of it. . . . Weakness overcame her, she fell asleep and — both physical and political barriers were removed. She and her parents were together. The Atlantic ocean, Siberia and Russian autocracy, all seemed to have evaporated as if in response to the wave of a magic wand, and she and her older sister were walking hand in hand through a beautiful garden, clinging to each other, gazing into each other's eyes. . . .

It was while Helen was walking through this magic garden, which the realm of sleep alone can conjure into existence, that Emil quietly let himself into the apartment with a latchkey. He walked over to where his wife lay on the couch on tiptoe and looked at her

for several moments. She opened her eyes suddenly.

"Oh, I had such a nice dream," she said, and proceeded to narrate it.

She was not much better. The medicine did not seem to do her much good. In the morning, they decided, they would call Dr. Ochsner once more. They spent the remainder of the night restlessly. Emil did not fall asleep until nearly daybreak. At ten o'clock he was awakened by a loud ringing. He opened the door and faced Dr. Ochsner.

"I got the laboratory report just about half an hour ago in the mail," the physician said with an effort at calmness. "Your wife must go to the hospital at once. There is not a minute to lose. It is a case of nephritis," he added, when he saw Witte looking at him dumfounded.

They broke the news to Helen cautiously. In the first few minutes she thought that going to the hospital was still a thing of the future, though near future. When told, however, that she must dress and leave the house immediately, she blanched. Emil cheered and encouraged her, but his own face was bloodless. Helen bit her lips and dressed as fast as her limp arms would permit. . . .

In the hospital, as she was led from the bathroom to the ward by the attendant, she caught sight of Emil's distressed face which was staring blankly ahead, help-

lessness written all over it. She broke down and began to cry. He saw her and was at her side in an instant. Dr. Ochsner came up and upbraided her good-naturedly for "acting so childish." She was led into the ward, the nurse shutting the door in Emil's face.

When Dr. Ochsner emerged from the ward and saw Emil still waiting, his lips assumed a thin smile.

"It will be several days," he explained, "before anything will be known definitely. You can call around here any time you like."

"Is she in danger?" Witte asked.

"Every woman who is about to give birth to a child is more or less in danger," said the physician. "However, we will pull her through without any trouble."

Dr. Ochsner shot a quick, inquisitive look at Witte.

"I don't like to pry into personal affairs too much," he said, "but is this Mrs. Witte's first child? Has she ever had a miscarriage? It is well to know it."

Witte admitted she had.

"There are altogether too many of these things happening," Dr. Ochsner said with a far-off look, "for the health of the mothers and the good of the race."

For several days in succession Emil visited Helen in her ward twice a day. One afternoon a nurse met him at the door and told him that Mrs. Witte could not be seen. Persistent questioning was met with persistent indefiniteness of answer.

Witte rang up Dr. Ochsner. The physician was not

in. He rang again at six. The physician gave him little satisfaction and advised him to call at nine. He called at nine. Dr. Ochsner was busy, he could not be called to the telephone.

Witte had hardly hung up the receiver when the editor called him over.

"Whip this into a story," West said, handing him some copy evidently written by a young reporter. Witte quickly began to gather the loose ends of an elopement story. He telephoned to police headquarters, and not getting any satisfaction, he ran over there himself. It was ten o'clock by the time he had the story well in hand. The editor wanted it for the first edition. There was not a minute to lose.

Before he had finished with it, however, he was handed some more copy to rewrite. It was twelve when he finally cleared his desk. He rang up the hospital. An attendant said he would make inquiries.

"A still-birth," the attendant's voice came over the wire after a space of half a minute.

"A what?" Witte demanded.

"A still-birth, a dead baby," the voice at the other end of the wire drawled.

Ten minutes later Witte was at the hospital. Could he see his wife? The attendant, a placid Swede, looked at him with astonishment, as if Witte had asked him if it was not possible to change night into daylight. It could not be done. Emil persisted. He

must see his wife for one moment. The night watchman shrugged his shoulders and called an interne. The interne was more sympathetic, but it was impossible. It was against the rules of the institution. Besides Mrs. Witte was not in a condition to be disturbed.

Emil roused Dr. Ochsner out of bed. He came out dressed in a bathrobe.

"I am sorry," said the physician, as he led Witte into his office. "But the baby could not be saved. It had been dead for some days."

Emil looked stony.

"I would not worry about the child," the physician continued. "Rather ought you to be thankful that your wife was saved. Such cases often end badly for the mother."

"How is she?" Emil asked quickly.

"Oh, fairly well — as well as could be expected under the circumstances."

"Is she out of danger?"

Dr. Ochsner tried to hide his answer behind a smile.

"I think it will come out all right," he said.

Helen was not out of danger. When Emil saw her the next morning she was very weak. In the afternoon she had fever and later became delirious.

For five days her life hung in the balance. Then a slight improvement was noted. He spent much of his

time at or near the hospital now. On the eighth day she was considerably improved. Emil could have cried for happiness at the return of intelligence into her eyes. The following day, in spite of the physician's injunction not to tax her with too much conversation, he told her of a letter he had received that morning from the editor of the *Universe* saying that there was a series of articles he wanted him to do. What a happy life they would lead yet! Let her only come out of the hospital!

A faint flush came into Helen's face, a flush of happiness and triumph. She knew those letters would come to Emil. She was not deceived in him.

She asked after the baby. Had Emil seen it at least, and what disposition had been made of it? She had wanted to see it badly, but the doctor would not permit. . . .

Emil cheered her. Helen drank in every word of his. It was like a tonic to her. She asked after their home. Everything must be covered with dust an inch thick, she said.

"You look bad," she added, as he was leaving. "I am afraid by the time I get out of here, *you* will be fit for the hospital."

The nurse had warned him for the third time that he must go. He took Helen's hand to his lips and held it there long. Then he pressed a kiss on her cheek. Tears suddenly came welling from his eyes. He felt

that he was losing all control over himself. Hastily he ran out of the room.

The instant Emil was out of the room Helen's fever rose.

That night Emil planned to get a good long sleep. He needed it. He went straight home from the office and into bed. He was asleep in a few moments.

A prolonged ringing roused him. At first he thought that the bell was ringing in a neighbor's apartment. But as the ringing persisted, he realized that it was his bell. He went to the door. A messenger handed him a telegram. He called the boy into the room and glanced at the clock in passing. It was nearly five.

The telegram was from the hospital. Helen had suffered a relapse and her case was serious.

" No answer," he said to the boy.

He was in the office of the hospital a little before six o'clock. The night attendant, sleepier than ever, motioned to him to go right up. He walked up three flights of stairs. The elevator was not yet running. The ward his wife was in lay at the end of the corridor. Midway up the hall he came upon a wheel cot which stood to one side and was hidden from view by a white screen. He had no clear notion what that might be, but the sight of it terrified him. He entered the ward and on tiptoe stole up to the bed Helen occupied. She was not there. . . . He wondered if he had made a

mistake and got off at the wrong floor. He made a dash for the door and was face to face with the nurse.

"Oh," she gasped, when she recognized Witte.

"Where is she?" he demanded hoarsely. "What has happened?"

The nurse walked down the hall hastily. Emil followed. She stopped in front of the screened wheel cot. She removed the screen. Emil threw himself over his wife's rigid body. . . .

CHAPTER XX

GRAY DAYS

WHEN Witte lifted his dry eyes from the face of his dead wife, he was confronted with the problem of the disposition of the body. He had no experience in such matters, and he stood there thinking rather unclearly, when an interne came to his assistance.

Witte explained to him briefly that they were strangers in New York, that he had no friends and knew no one.

"You'd better see the superintendent of the hospital as soon as he comes," the interne counseled.

The superintendent gave him the name of a Jewish undertaker.

"He will do the right thing by you," he said.

For a long time Witte debated with himself whether to notify Graves or not. His friendship with Graves had hitherto been purely an office affair. Graves knew, of course, that Witte was married. He knew when Helen came to New York. Once or twice he asked Witte how his wife liked the city, and there the

matter ended. Witte had never invited Graves to his home.

It would have been hard for Emil to explain just why he had hesitated to invite so good a friend as Graves to his home. Off-hand he might have answered that the house was not exactly what he wished it to be. It was still more of a roost than a home. He might have said, too, that Graves being so much older than himself, and an editor, while he was only a reporter, he did not feel that it was right to bring down their professional friendship to a purely personal, family basis. But these would only be make-believe answers.

The real reason why he never invited Graves to the house was that he was a Jew and Graves a Gentile. Isolated experiences, a few of them going back to his college days, had forced upon him the conviction that the anti-social attitude which Christians were taking toward Jews in the old world had not entirely been overcome in the new. And friendship with a Gentile had best not be pushed too far.

He had seen Jew and Gentile mingle in offices in Chicago. They were friends. They had confidences, their common secrets. But this was all during working hours. After office hours their ways parted. The social life of the Gentile was not the social life of the Jew. Some newspapers, too, made a subtle distinction in their columns between "society news" and "news

of Jewish society". . . They did not label Jewish society news differently. But they managed to group Jewish engagements, Jewish entertainments, Jewish personals in a column apart from the regular society news. . . . This anomaly of perfect equality between Jew and Gentile in the office, in business life, and the gulf that divided the two in social life had interested Witte when he was merely an observer. It pained him, however, when it entered his own personal life. Still he feared to make a break. He feared to invite Graves to his house lest this somehow result in an estrangement. Graves, on the other hand, was too much of a man of the world to be impolitic in such matters.

After notifying his office, Witte yielded to an inmost desire for the sympathy of a friend and telephoned to Graves informing him of his calamity. Graves immediately offered his services. He would meet Witte at the undertaker's at four-thirty. Like a drowning man, Witte clutched at what little comfort and solace there was in this offer of his friend. . . .

. . . . The funeral cortège, besides Witte, consisted of Graves, a copy reader of the *Bulletin* whom the latter brought with him and a reporter of the *Leader* who had become friends with Witte. The undertaker was a little nonplussed at first by the unusual situation. There were not even ten Jews — the number required for the reciting of the prayer over the dead. . . .

However, he was a man of the world, and readily took in the situation. Everything moved with exceeding swiftness.

How much more quickly his wife was being expedited from the land of the living than his mother, and with how much less ceremony, did not escape Emil. A wave of resentment swept over him — resentment against himself, against fate. Had Helen not been so lonely in New York, had she had her people there, her funeral would have taken on a different complexion. He hardly noticed how he was shoved into the carriage and how fast the carriage was speeding toward Manhattan and away from the cemetery. . . . He came to himself fully and clearly only when Brooklyn Bridge came in sight.

At Park Row the driver stopped. Graves and the other two men stepped out. Witte followed. He looked about for a moment and then started.

"Where are you going?" Graves asked.

"To the office."

Graves was about to remonstrate, but changed his mind. Perhaps the office was after all the best place for Witte.

Except for the city editor and two or three reporters no one in the office knew that Witte had lost his wife. Several men passed him with a nod or a smile. He replied as best he could. He was spared the necessity

of going to work that evening and he sat before his open desk looking at the newspapers before him with unseeing eyes.

At ten o'clock he left the office. He started for the elevated as usual, but changed his mind. He felt that he would not have the courage to enter his apartment again, to sleep through the night there. He walked into the nearest hotel and asked for a room.

He had hoped that when he disposed of his flat and settled in a room that he would be able to resume work once more. He was anxious to work now, to work hard. It would be splendid to become absorbed and to forget. . . . But he could not become absorbed. There was a perpetual thumping in his head. Before his eyes there would frequently swim streaks of blacknesss. He would never fall asleep before five in the morning, and his sleep was fitful, restless —

The thought of Helen never left him. What a strange thing life was! And how still more strange was the power of love. This girl who had a father and mother somewhere far off, in Russia, had linked her life with his. She had forgotten every one and cleaved to him. And, as she lived for him, she had now died for him. . . . That was becoming a fixed idea in his mind — Helen had died for him, through him. As in the case of his mother his success came too late. It should have come sooner — soon after their

marriage. Then that horrible deed, that wanton destruction of what should have been their first-born, would never have occurred. And if that had not occurred she would have been among the living now. Though the doctor had not attributed her illness to that violent and unnatural operation which she had had performed in Chicago, Witte felt convinced that her illness and death were directly caused by it. And he was to blame. . . .

His dreams were of her. One night her parents appeared before him — a sad, sorrowful Jewish couple. They were not angry with him, but they were sad. They did not speak to him, they merely looked. But their look seemed to say:

"She was our only daughter. The other one in Siberia — God knows when we shall see her again. . . . We trusted her to you. How did you fulfil your trust toward us?"

Emil cried out and awoke. He got out of bed and walked to the window. The city was just coming to life. It was six o'clock. People were beginning to pour out into the streets. The day's rush for the subway, elevated and cars was beginning. He had slept less than two hours. But he could not bring himself to pull the shade down and go to sleep again.

So he sat there behind the curtain watching the city take up its day's work. For more than two hours men and women passed under his window. First came

factory workers. They carried their lunch with them. They laughed and chatted as they walked. Then came the white-collared brigade, clerks, salesmen, office workers, stenographers. They carried no lunch. Their clothes were of a different cut than those of the factory workers, but they were often more shiny. He wondered how they lived — whether they were happy.

Happiness, in the main, was the chief business of life. We were all struggling, fighting, suffering, enduring in order to gain happiness. He turned his thoughts inward. Would he ever have been happier if he had chosen any other occupation than the one he was in — than writing? Books — if he could only write books, he always thought, he would be happy. But would he? And suppose these books did not sell? Suppose, what is still worse, they did not rise above the ordinary. Ah, what a tragedy the ordinary book was!

He had been to the Astor library and looked over some old newspapers of twenty-five and forty years back. There were advertisements of books in them, and book reviews. Certain works that were hailed by the critics a generation back as epoch-making were unknown not only to the public but even to the publishers of to-day. He looked for them high and low but could not find them. In the space of one-third of a century thousands of books that their writers relied upon to give them fame, yes, even immortality, had been swept

off the earth. Time, the stern critic and inexorable judge, had thrown them upon the scrap heap as the "luckless pots marr'd in the making. . . ." The authors of these books were not spared from oblivion. If he only had chosen any life but the life of a writer! Helen might be living and he might have been spared so much misery. He would not have had to drink the cup of bitterness to the dregs.

The thought of suicide frequently came now along with the peculiar thumping in his head. He wondered whether he would have sufficient courage to embrace death of his own volition. Did it require a stronger impulse than pain or grief to send a man headlong into eternity?

With these thoughts of suicide came the counter thought — his father. The police would telegraph his death to Spring Water. An officer there would bring the news to Aaron. He would try to break it to him cautiously, but would blurt it out all the same. . . . He had seen such things done. Or maybe it would be a reporter who would inform his father — the Spring Water newspaper, too, might be getting up-to-date, enterprising. He pictured to himself the look in his father's face when the news was broken to him of his, Emil's, death, by his own hand. . . .

He went to the office as usual that day. Several times during the afternoon, however, streaks of blackness passed before his eyes and seemed to take longer

for their journey than usual. He went out to dinner at six o'clock. At the sight of food he realized how sick he was. A friend took him home. A doctor was called in. He would come again in the morning.

In the morning the physician gave Emil a thorough examination. Could Mr. Witte take a month or two off and go to a sanitarium? He needed a rest. It was not a question of drugs. Drugs would not restore his overwrought nerves to normal again.

Witte telephoned to Graves. The latter came in a short time.

"I know a better place than a sanitarium," Graves counseled, "your home. I believe you told me once you have a sister and father out West. Go to them. Stay there two or three months — or longer, if necessary. It is better than a sanitarium. There are too many people with aches and pains, both real and imaginary, in sanitariums for a man to get well there."

The thought of going home at first seemed preposterous to Witte. It would be different if his mother were living, if they still had the sort of home they used to have. Still, the anticipation of being once more with his father, with his family, distilled a soothing sensation through his veins. He made ready for the journey. Graves took him to the Pennsylvania Station and helped him with his baggage.

"Write," Graves urged him as they were shaking hands in the Pullman. "Tell me about the West.

Most of my people have lived and died somewhere between New York and Boston. I hope to see a little more of the country. I would like to go West myself some day."

Time had dealt kindly with Alex Stein. He was now the owner of one of the most prosperous stores in Spring Water. He owned a beautiful home in a more exclusive section of the city and considerable business property in the heart of the mercantile district. His ambition to become a leading citizen in his community had been realized. He was a fairly prominent figure in the city's civic life. His portly figure — he had taken on flesh in the last few years — was frequently seen about city hall. His interest in public affairs and influence in certain circles in the city had resulted in his appointment as a member of the board of education. Alex Stein took his office very seriously, and his conscientious work in behalf of the public gained for him considerable respect in administration quarters.

He now strongly resembled those "city hall Jews" in Chicago, who had been his envy when he was a boy. He, too, could do a man a favor by calling a city official on the telephone.

The contempt which Alex Stein once had for his wife's family had imperceptibly worn off. If he still thought them "greenhorns" he never uttered this in their, or in his wife's presence. He was especially

kindly disposed toward Emil now. For Emil was in no small measure responsible for his brother-in-law's success in politics.

From the moment Emil's signed articles began to appear in the *Sunday Star* Alex Stein knew how to take advantage of it. It supplied him a topic for conversation. When speaking to the local political satellites, he would invariably twist the conversation about so as to find an opportunity to stick in a phrase like, "as my brother-in-law said in last Sunday's paper." And if the politician in question did not happen to know what was meant by this reference, Stein very deliberately and very gladly supplied the information that his brother-in-law, Emil Witte, was working on the Chicago *Star* and was one of the ablest of the younger writers on civic questions.

When Emil Witte's first article appeared in a magazine, Alex Stein showed it to the advertising manager of the *Sentinel* with considerable pride. The advertising man fully shared Stein's pride in his brother-in-law, and two or three days later the *Sentinel* came out with a column story telling of the success a Spring Water boy was winning as a writer. Well to the front of the story brief mention was made of the fact that this young writer, Emil Witte, was the brother-in-law of the well-known merchant, Alex Stein, etc., etc.

Every article that came from the pen of Witte was

so used by Stein as to lend an air of intellectuality to himself. He saw to it that people, the people he was interested in, should not be surprised at Witte's success in the writing field, but that instead they should say, "What wonder is it? Does not he come from an intellectual family? Take that brother-in-law of his, Alex Stein — a very intellectual man."

Witte went from the train straight to his brother-in-law's store. Stein was profuse in his welcome. He was genuinely sorry for Emil's misfortunes. The sight of his brother-in-law, thin and haggard and still with the boyish look in his face in spite of his thirty years, aroused his compassion.

"Where is father?" Emil asked.

"Father is on the farm — did he not write to you yet?"

Emil recalled that his father had written him — it was the week Helen was in the hospital — that Alex Stein had bought a farm and that he, Aaron, would devote himself entirely to overseeing things on the place.

After Emil had spent half an hour with Clara and her children, Alex came with a runabout which he had acquired only recently for the purpose of driving out to his farm every two or three days. The farm was only five miles from the city and the drive through the green fields on that June morning acted like a tonic upon Witte. The atmosphere was soothing and in-

vigorating. It took loads off his heart, and his brain felt as if heavy clouds were being lifted from it.

A brisk trot, and Stein's farm hove into view. Emil discerned his father standing in the yard. Aaron was gazing toward them intently. He evidently recognized Stein's rig and was wondering who the person sitting beside his son-in-law might be. As they came nearer Aaron recognized Emil. Waving his arms and uttering inarticulate exclamations he ran toward them.

Emil had meant to meet his father with stoic resignation and self-control. But the tears got the best of him.

CHAPTER XXI

FATHER AND SON

TWICE Aaron came up to the door of the room where Emil was sleeping, and upon hearing his son's even breathing, retraced his steps to the kitchen. He would not wake him. Morning sleep was good for children and to him Emil was a child once more, and a sick child at that.

He changed the position of the coffee-pot on the stove so as to prevent its further boiling and went out into the yard. He was trying to think of some point of interest to show Emil about the farm that day. They had seen a good deal of the place in the week Emil had been back from New York. But Aaron must find something to keep up his son's interest and to keep his thoughts from reverting to himself, to the past. . . .

Aaron had his own ideas about curing those sicknesses that are not of the body, but of the soul.

When Clara, with her husband and her father, was alone the evening after Emil came, she said she was convinced that her brother was very sick. He looked ill and broken, physically and mentally. Alex Stein suggested that they call in the best doctor in Spring Water and spare no expense. Clara began making

plans for taking care of him. He would have to get very good care.

Aaron, however, waved aside all talk of calling a doctor.

"Don't put yourself out," he said to his daughter. "You have enough to do taking care of the children. I'll look after Emil myself. I'll bring him around. Just leave him to me."

Clara did not leave them alone entirely. She ran out to the farm every few days to see how her father was looking after Emil, whether he was not starving the boy. . . . But there was no danger of that. Aaron had developed into an excellent cook and manager. As for the care he was giving Emil, no doctor could advise better care.

When Aaron came up to Emil's door for the third time the latter was dressing.

The fence at the far end of the two hundred acre tract was broken, he informed his son. After breakfast they would go down to fix it. Alex Stein had a man running the place for him and there was nothing for Aaron to do there. But since Emil had come, the old man was constantly looking for a chance to tinker about the place. It was so diverting, and the exercise in trotting up and down the farm was good for Emil. . . .

So, as soon as they were through breakfasting, Aaron took a hammer and some nails and started off

on a slow circuitous walk toward that end of the field where the fence was broken. They passed a little ravine where cattle were grazing. Then they came to a spring. Here they drank and sat in the shade and chatted for the better part of an hour.

Centuries of life in the ghettos of the old world have extinguished in the Jew all love for nature. Emil was no exception. He could dissect human emotions. His heart and brain were attuned like a violin to human suffering, to the joys and sorrows of his fellows. But nature had never interested him much. The animal and plant worlds were pretty much of a sealed book to him. He could not call more than two or three flowers by their names. Now this book was opening itself before his eyes. He was becoming interested in things he had formerly never noticed. He could sit for hours and watch the manœuvers of a squirrel. A worm crawling slowly along the earth would arouse his interest. He would lie on his back, screen his eyes with his hand, and watch the myriads of little insects and creatures floating in the bluish haze about him.

In such moments the memory of the city, of the struggling, seething life there, evaporated, became dreamlike. The city seemed to lose all sense of reality. His father was reading in the papers — Emil was not reading anything — that men were dying from heat in Chicago and New York daily. And while he listened to these items they did not seem to penetrate his mind.

He could hardly understand that. Even his father's occasional remark about the sultriness of the weather found no response within him. He welcomed the sun. The blazing rays were penetrating and melting and healing his frozen heart. The sunshine and warmth seemed to ease the thumping in his head. . . .

Two or three times a week Emil would spend afternoons with his sister. Either Clara came out to see him, or else he would drive into town. Alex Stein welcomed these visits of Emil. No matter how busy he might be he would put aside his books and figures and chat with his brother-in-law.

Emil noticed the change that had come over Stein. He had softened a great deal since the days when he first entered their household. Business success together with his growing prestige in the community had made Stein more tolerant of people. He had a name among his employees as a considerate employer.

Aaron's attitude toward his son-in-law, too, had changed. If Alex Stein still was unable to follow his Talmudic discussions, his son-in-law was now practicing many of the things the rabbis preached and exhorted. He was contributing liberally to the poor. He was a director of the Spring Water charity society. He not only gave money but time to the management of the society's affairs. Whenever a call came to aid the distressed, no matter of what race or what country,

Alex Stein was always at the head of the list of contributors. Just as in his younger days he had followed eagerly the news of the sporting world, so he now read religiously a journal which was disseminating ideas of welfare and humanity.

But while he changed his methods of dealing with people considerably, Alex Stein did not let up a whit. He was working harder than ever, in fact, for he was now projecting big undertakings. He had the ambition to see an up-to-date department store in Spring Water, with himself, of course, as the owner of it. It was with this end in view that he had been amassing property in the business section. What stood in the way of the execution of the project was the corner lot he needed, which was owned by an old settler in the community, the druggist, Holstman. Holstman was loath to part with the property, and Alex Stein would not resort to methods that would drive the old man close to the wall. It would not be in keeping for Stein as a leading citizen, and a member of the board of education, to resort even to a legitimate trick to force the old man to sell out to him. So he waited patiently and let the project of building a department store accumulate momentum, so that once started it would proceed rapidly.

The afternoons Emil spent in the city were beginning to give him great pleasure. He would stay for supper at Clara's house. Emil would play with his little

nephews. A healthy, hearty laugh was coming back to him. . . .

Once when Emil and his father drove home, the horse started up at a gallop. Emil, who held the reins, was thrilled by it like a boy. He remarked this to his father, and the latter said:

"Yes, you never really had a childhood, like American children have. In the ghetto children not only grow old — they are born old. And ever since you came to this country it has always been work and trouble."

Emil ran over in his mind his twenty years in America —

"Yes, work and trouble," he repeated thoughtfully.

Aaron was sorry he had ventured into the field of reminiscences. Both the subject he had brought up and the manner in which he had spoken about it had drawn down a sudden gloom upon Emil. They rode in silence the rest of the way. . . .

Now that Emil was recovering his mental and physical poise he was beginning to ply his father with questions. Aaron talked at first hesitatingly, then, seeing that Emil was strong enough to delve into the past, he talked gladly about the many things in their own lives, things either vaguely or totally unknown to Emil. The great world with its problems and sorrows, which had occupied Emil all the years he was working on newspapers, now seemed to fade from his memory, and

the little world of the Witte households, of immediate friends and relatives, took the center of the stage for the time being.

His father loved to dwell on the past, especially on those incidents in it in which Emil's mother had figured. Aaron would never grow tired of speaking of his dead wife. . . .

Often when his father talked to him with such tenderness of his mother, a pain would come over Emil — a pain for Helen. Would that he, too, had a child to whom he could in after days speak of her. But it was not given to her to have a child. It was not given to Helen to preserve her image for him in a living part of herself. All he had of her was the image that had chiseled itself into his brain. . . .

On nights when he thought of this he would toss on his bed for hours, or would raise the window and look long at the stars and listen to the rustling leaves in the trees. . . .

The first week in September brought disagreeable weather. A cold rain with a sharp wind heralded the first breath of autumn. All through the night the trees groaned under the onslaught of the raging elements. Emil lay awake a good part of the night. It was a unique sensation to be awake and listening to moanings of the storm at night — in the country.

In the morning when he came to breakfast he found

the kitchen stove going. It was exuding a pleasant warmth. The smell of burning pine saturated the room. He felt a soothing sensation penetrate his very bones. For years he had not sat in front of a burning stove. This sensation gave him immense pleasure.

The rain kept up throughout the forenoon and the leaden clouds gave no promise of a let-up. After dinner Aaron joined his son in the kitchen. He sat and smoked a pipe — he smoked more and oftener since the death of his wife. Emil was wading through a batch of magazines he had not looked at all summer.

He found names in these magazines of writers he knew, or had heard of. He read one short story and then another. Then he paused and thought. . . . Neither of the stories satisfied him completely. Life was deeper, ever so much deeper than the writers of these stories painted it. . . . The " love pangs " in the stories were often a pretense — the sorrow in them not deep, not genuine. . . . Have men and women forgotten how to love? Has suffering become so easy to endure, so superficial? Or was it the fault of the writers? Apparently the writers were not " eating their bread with tears " and were not spending their " nights a-sorrowing "— Goethe's formula for good writing.

He thought of his own stories, the unprinted, the semi-written children of his brain. Most of these half-written stories were lying in his trunk. A longing

for them came over him. He left the room and soon returned with a bundle of papers. He looked ruefully at the fragments of writing on which he had spent so many weary and ecstatic hours — hours he had taken from Helen. He came to a score or more of scribbled pages. It was the book, the book he had begun early in his newspaper career, the book that was to paint life deep and strong.

He read the fragmentary manuscript page by page. The pictures the pages presented were fresh and thrilling, though the writing was bad in spots. He struck out a few words here, added a sentence there.

It occurred to him that it would be worth while rewriting these pages. It was worth while preserving them. Some day they would form the nucleus, the beginning of a book.

His father was out of the room by this time. It was but a step into his bedroom to get the machine. He adjusted the typewriter on the kitchen table. The keys were a trifle stiff, but that passed away after a few moments. A wave of happiness came over him as the familiar clicking of the keys began to reverberate through the room —

Twice Aaron Witte hovered past the kitchen door, attracted there by the strange noise the machine was making, and twice he receded on tiptoe for fear that his presence might disturb his son. Once he caught the tenseness in Emil's face as his eyes shifted from the

page which lay before him on the table to the page which was growing out of his typewriter inch by inch, and a strange happiness akin to humiliation overcame him. Aaron had never seen Emil work on a typewriter, and the quickness and suppleness with which his brain and hands worked together filled the old man with a strange pride in his boy — his favorite son upon whom he lavished more affection and more attention than on all his children. If Masha had only lived! If she could have been brought to life and but for a single instant be put there before the door to watch Emil's flushed face and fine forehead as the thoughts were flashing from it on paper!

Through the night the book had shaped itself definitely in his mind. He was more than ever convinced now that his first choice of ideas and situations was a happy one. It still rained in the morning. In the kitchen the stove was again going, the burning pine acting like a tonic on his nerves. After breakfast he again sat down to the typewriter. His father had sought out a special table for him and had had the legs sawed off so as to make it the right height. By eleven o'clock the ten pages he had written the previous afternoon were increased to again as many. At dinner he told his father that he could feel his health come back by leaps and bounds. They laughed and ate heartily. . . .

These mornings at the typewriter were now a stand-

ing feature with Emil. His mind was permeated with ideas and pictures. Episodes and chapters were crowding one another in his brain and there was but one way to relieve this strain on his nerves — to put these thoughts and pictures and episodes on paper. So he wrote morning after morning. Aaron insisted that he refrain from working afternoons — he was there to rest, to recover his health.

When the first snow fell, a few days before Thanksgiving, Witte took an inventory of his book. He found that it was more than two-thirds done. . . . It was then he permitted himself to surprise Graves, with whom he was corresponding with fair regularity, with the news that he was working on a story. Graves' reply was immediate and enthusiastic. He was hoping that Emil would be along soon. He ought to come back to New York as soon as his health permitted.

Emil had completely recovered his health. Many of the aches and pains of a few months back were now an indistinct memory. He wondered at times how a person could so easily forget the sensations of pain and discomfort which so shortly before had held him in their grip. But the renewed strength of youth apparently would not stand for such trifling things as disease memories.

A longing for the city, for the office atmosphere, a homesickness for the printed word, now frequently

overtook him. And this longing became stronger as the book neared completion. The first week in January it was finished.

Aaron reconciled himself to the thought of his son's going back to New York. He suggested, however, that Emil stay with him till spring. Hitherto Aaron Witte had nursed his son, he now wanted two months to look at him, to enjoy his presence. Who could foretell when they would see each other again?

The last week in March Witte received a telegram from Graves. Graves had been called by the *Leader* as night editor. There was to be a complete reorganization of the staff. Van Bever, the managing editor, was looking for a rewrite man. He could fix it for Witte to get the job. Did he want it? He had a week's time to get there. Witte wired an acceptance that same day.

A family dinner was arranged by Clara for Friday evening. Harry and his wife and children came. Alex Stein was in the best of spirits. The fact that Emil was called by a New York editor pleased him greatly. He took it as a personal compliment and was making much of it — as if he had been responsible for it. The fact that he had at one time urged Emil angrily to take up law or any other profession instead of "the fool course" which led him into writing, was conveniently forgotten by Stein.

Emil was up early the next morning. He was to

leave at ten o'clock. Alex Stein went down to the store and said he would be back in time to take Emil to the train. Aaron Witte was busying himself about Emil's luggage. Emil and Clara remained alone in the house.

His sister came up close to him and began speaking about his journey and New York. He must take good care of himself there. He must guard his health and he must write to her — to her especially — and often. She broke down and wept. Emil caressed her arm and her shoulder and urged her to calm herself. What was there to weep about? He was going to New York in a far better state than when he came. Everything was all right. Father was well and contented on the farm — not a bad old age at that. . . . He would, of course, come to visit them at the first opportunity.

"Do come," Clara emitted between sobs. "Come next summer if you can — I am so lonely."

And then she hid her face in her hands and moaned and spoke in fragments:

"Alex — he is good to me. But — he is not like one of us — He is always thinking of business — money — He is not like you — like father. He does not confide in me as father did in mother — He does not have time for his family —"

Emil looked at his sister, who was drying her eyes, and was astounded to find how closely she resembled his mother — the mother he had known as a little child.

He had never suspected any rift between Clara and her husband. . . . He was profoundly disturbed by his sister's tears. . . . He tried to console her.

He absolved Alex Stein from blame for his money madness. It was not his fault, this never-ceasing struggle for gold and more gold. It was the cardinal sin of American life. Money madness was the curse of the age, the blot on our civilization. Alex Stein was merely falling in line with the ideals, or lack of ideals, of the times.

Emil talked at length and Clara hung on his every word. As she looked into her brother's resigned eyes, she was struck by the close resemblance Emil was beginning to bear to their father. If he had a beard Emil would look just as her father had looked when she was a little girl. And he talked like her father — never harshly, always mitigatingly, always subduedly.

CHAPTER XXII

THE BOOK OF LIFE

THERE are streets in Brooklyn where the quiet is so intense that the very stillness fairly threatens to become audible at times. Everything in these streets moves noiselessly. The maid who takes a child for an outing walks as if somebody was lying at the point of death and a laugh or exclamation might do irretrievable hurt. Carriages and limousines glide through the streets at certain hours of the day, but they, too, glide noiselessly. The heavily curtained windows of the residences give no sign of the life that is going on within.

The spacious and imposing residences in these streets are occupied mostly by lawyers, bankers, brokers, and higher class merchants who have their offices or business places in Manhattan. In the morning between eight-thirty and nine-thirty o'clock these men are seen leaving their homes in carriages or automobiles. At five in the afternoon they return. As their going so their coming is soft and quiet. The walk and demeanor of the men is such as to appear almost studied in its fear of noise. In the evening alone one occasionally hears laughter in these streets, as when a theater party starts out or else returns home.

The men and women who live in these streets are without exception of the "old families," families with New England traditions, families that belong to the American aristocracy of culture. They are not of the class of money kings. Rather are they the intellectual servants of these money kings and of corporations. Immigrants invariably are fascinated by these faces, for there is kindliness in them and sincere interest as well as simplicity. Even the aloofness of some of these families has not the inborn contempt for the people one finds in the titled nobility of Europe, or the insolence of the new rich. Emerson and Thoreau are still the penates, the family gods, in these homes.

One of these quiet and exclusive residences the Graves' family occupied. The late William Parton Graves was a famous lawyer and scholar. There were several volumes of his essays and addresses in the library. In spite, however, of both his literary inclinations, which resulted in his taking much time from business and limiting his law practice to high-grade work only, and of his untimely death, he left his family fairly well provided for. Mrs. Graves owned the residence and had the income from a large farm in Vermont. There was also some suburban property which was rapidly rising in value.

Toward this house George Graves and Emil Witte were now coming. It was the first invitation the editor had extended to Witte to spend the evening with

him, his mother and sister, and was made in such a sincere manner that Witte at once accepted it.

Since Witte's arrival from Spring Water, some six weeks before, he and Graves had been drawn together more closely, first by their office work — Emil Witte was now doing considerable work under the immediate supervision of Graves — and secondly by Witte's book.

Graves was very much interested in this book. They talked about it frequently. He urged Witte to whip the manuscript into presentable shape and submit it to an editor — there was no use losing time. Witte was too busy on the *Leader,* however, to give the manuscript the necessary time for revision.

"I have described your book, that is, as much as I know about it, to my sister," Graves said to Witte. "She thinks it is a timely work, and that you ought to take it to a publisher at once."

Graves had great respect for his sister's opinion. Barbara Graves knew the publishing business well indeed. Before becoming secretary to the editor of the *Advance* she had worked for the Seymour and Brothers Publishing Company for some years.

It was at this point that Graves suggested urgently that Witte spend an evening with them. Together they could talk over his book and perhaps a plan would suggest itself for its marketing.

So Witte found himself in the Graves' sitting-room,

answering the greetings of Mrs. Graves, a woman in the sixties, who concerned herself greatly about making her guest comfortable and putting him at ease. It was the first time in the period of nearly three years of their acquaintance that Witte found himself talking to Miss Graves on subjects other than business.

They talked about the West. She had known it only cursorily, having taken a trip to the Pacific Coast.

"That," said Miss Graves, "is really no way of seeing one's country. You cannot see far from an observation platform."

Her brother turned the conversation to the book. Witte told her how he had conceived the idea for the story years previously as a reporter for a Chicago paper, and how he had carried it into execution in those autumn days on the farm, while the burning stove was diffusing the odor of pine through the farmhouse and his brain.

"Could I see it?" Miss Graves asked.

"Yes, gladly."

He gave the manuscript to Graves the following evening to take home with him.

Three days later Witte received a note from Miss Graves asking his permission to show the manuscript to a friend of hers, a Miss Gardiner, a reader for a publishing house.

He wrote back a note of appreciation for the interest which Miss Graves was taking in his manuscript and

jestingly added that she might consider herself a trustee of his work and could dispose of it any way she saw fit.

"I have accepted the trusteeship," she wrote in the same spirit, "and after having made a few trifling editorial changes and corrections, I have turned the manuscript over into very trustworthy hands, where it is now being rewritten. It needed that badly."

Both Graves and his sister apparently forgot the manuscript for the next two weeks. Graves met Witte every night at work as usual, but there was no mention of the book. At the end of two weeks there came a letter signed by a Mr. Alden, the president of the Seymour and Brothers Publishing Company. Witte was informed that his book was accepted and was asked to come in at the first opportunity to talk over certain changes that were desirable in the story.

Formal as was the note of acceptance which Mr. Alden had written, the reception he gave Witte was the very antithesis.

"You have here a splendid book," said Alden. "It is refreshing. I was delighted to read it."

The publisher was a man past fifty, gray-haired, smooth-shaven. He gave one the impression that he was part and parcel of an older generation. Witte learned in the next few moments, however, that this man who spoke to him in almost clerical manner, as the parson in a small community speaks to one of his

parishioners, was very up-to-date in his knowledge of conditions, far more up-to-date, in fact, than many a brisk and brittle younger man.

"I have been wishing for some time for such a book," Alden continued. "The technique of the thing is weak in places, but that will be pulled up in the editing. The main thing is the subject matter, the atmosphere. That is there in inimitable manner.

"I looked over the manuscript again after I wrote to you," he went on after a pause, "and I am inclined to make no changes in the story. I believe I shall let the situations stand just the way you have them. Your judgment and feeling in the book is right. You have a work here — a work —"

He broke off, apparently not sure how to phrase his criticism or praise of the book. He continued:

"Am I making myself clear? You have a story here that is different from anything that has been written in years. There is heart in it. There is something else in this book of yours. Something for which we have no word in English, but which the Germans call 'überlebtes' — things one has lived through, sufferings one has experienced in one's own soul —"

Alden searched with his gray eyes the face of the young man before him with a look of genuine sympathy, and said:

"You must have gone through a lot — you must have suffered a lot to be able to write such a book.

Such a work as yours is not merely thought out — it is lived. There is a note of sincerity in it that is too often a stranger to American literature. It is the book of life. It is epic in its depth of grandeur. It is a distinct contribution to American letters."

Mr. Alden made Witte sketch his life for him. At the mention of Manning, the publisher pricked up his ears. He had known Manning years ago in Boston. Witte described to him just what Manning's purpose was in hiring him on the Chicago *Star,* the sort of writing he wanted of him.

Ten days later Witte received another note from the publisher to come and see him.

"I want you to go to work for us," Alden said bluntly. He then proceeded to explain.

The Seymour and Brothers publishing house, as Witte knew, was publishing not only books but a number of magazines, among them the *Age,* a well-known weekly.

"I think," said Alden, "that we can do considerable for you and that you can do considerable for the *Age.* We have been looking around for a likely man to take on our staff for some time. I think you are the man we want.

"We want you to write editorials for the *Age.* We want you to tell us of America's newest problems. I agree perfectly with the sentiments of your book that, sifted down to fundamentals, the greatest problem

for this country to solve is the bread and contentment — accent the ' contentment '— problem, and that Goldsmith's sentiment to the effect that ill fares the land where wealth accumulates and men decay is not sentimentality, but truth, practical statesmanship. In your story you have brought out the dignity, the poetry, and the despair of the job. But you have brought them out only as an artist — which was right considering the fact that you were writing fiction. We want you to bring out these questions as a publicist, editorially, emphatically, in the *Age* every week. I agree fully with your sentiment that there is no reason why men who want work should not find it. There is no reason why work should be made hateful by mismanagement, by improper surroundings, by indifferent or brutal treatment of the worker. I agree with you that there is no reason why culture and refinement should be the heritage of the few. It belongs to all the people. There should be no room for caste and class lines in a democracy, in America."

Witte, overwhelmed by the offer, listened in silence. He had never thought of himself in the light of an editorial writer. He had always associated elderly men with work of that sort. He admitted it frankly to Mr. Alden. The latter laughed.

" That is the accepted view," said the publisher. " But it is a mistaken view. It is the young, not necessarily in years but in mind, in spirit, who shape the

course of civilization, and the young should be allowed to say just what the course should be. The young writer has a distinct viewpoint which the older man often loses. He has enthusiasm. We should not wait until he has lost these qualities to let him write editorials.

"The editorial," Alden went on after some moments, "is the poem of to-day. In a previous century the best political and social writing was done in poetry. To-day it is done in editorials. We must have more men of force and of vision — and of youth — speaking through our editorial columns."

Witte hurried to the office of the *Leader*. On his desk lay a number of clippings with instructions from the city editor as to what length they should be rewritten. He was in the midst of one of these stories when Graves rushed up to him radiant with delight.

He already knew Witte was going to work for Alden. He shook his hand warmly.

"Great luck!" cried Graves. "It makes a national figure of you. Mr. Alden thinks he has made a great find in you. You have arrived!"

"Who told you?" Witte wondered.

"Miss Gardiner, one of the readers for Seymour's, telephoned my sister. She and Barbara are chums. It was to Miss Gardiner, you know, that she took your book in the first place, and it was on her recommendation that Alden read it."

"I see," said Witte.

An office boy came running after Graves. He was wanted in the managing editor's office. The executive heads were going into council to decide on the next day's paper. He left Witte hurriedly.

At midnight Witte sat down to write his resignation. But Van Bever, the managing editor, himself walked up to the desk. He had already heard from Graves about Witte's leaving. He came up to congratulate him.

When Witte, after a brisk walk in the night air, reached his room, his exultation left him. In its place came a sadness and a vacant feeling. To whom should he tell the story of his success? His mother, whose support in old age he had hoped to be, was dead. She had passed away without seeing him safely anchored. And Helen — He felt as if his heart was bathing in its own blood at the thought of his dead wife. . . .

The lines from Goethe's Dedication in "Faust" came to him:

> "Mein Leid ertönt der unbekannten Menge,
> Ihr Beifall selbst macht meinem Herzen bang. . . ."

Those who could recall his struggle and understand his triumphs were no longer among the living. Those who would applaud him were not those whose applause he craved. What was achievement, what was fame, when those you have worked for, striven for, are no longer with you to share your fame, when the days of

youth and happiness are but a memory and linger like a faintly quivering dream? What is success or fame to a heart that harbors the graves of love and happiness?

He raised the window to let the cool night air rest his overwrought nerves. But the air chilled without resting him. He pulled down the shade and turned on the light. On the table lay a worn-out copy of "Faust," the copy he had used as a student. He opened it and began to read. . . .

CHAPTER XXIII

OLD SORROWS AND A NEW LIFE

THREE years had passed. Except for an added sharpness about his temples and the intensified pallor of his features, Emil Witte had changed little outwardly. Within him, however, the change which had been ushered in twenty-five years back on that first morning of his in the new world, when his father dressed him in American clothes from head to foot — that change was now reaching the highest consummation. . . .

Witte had become peculiarly American. He had drunk deep not only of American ideals, but of American culture and American traditions. His articles and editorials in the *Age* attracted attention particularly by their Emersonian flavor. The cultural background of Witte's writing was that of New England. Not one in a thousand readers of these unsigned editorials on American life and problems and ideals would have suspected that they were written by any one not of American birth. Many, indeed, would have placed the writer of such articles as none other than a scion of one of the oldest American families.

Still in the privacy of his home — he now occupied a modest apartment in Greenwich Village — Emil would take his pen once a week or ten days and would write a letter in Yiddish to his father. To write to his father was one of his great pleasures. The true reporter's instinct for seeing life at first hand had not left him: he still would make his pilgrimages to the people in search of ideas as well as "color." In these ramblings through the city he would come upon a synagogue or into "Jewish streets" on the East Side occasionally, and then memories of his past would be revived. And, as is characteristic of such memories, he would dwell fondly upon them. . . .

Witte's place among the younger writers and editors was definitely established by his second book "The Fate of Democracies," which had been put on the market a few months before, and reviews of which were beginning to appear in the papers and magazines.

It was a cool August morning, and Witte, who had been unable to fasten himself down to his desk in earnest for some weeks, determined to make the most of it. There were several articles in his mind waiting to be transferred to paper. He decided to put that "problem" out of his head for the day, at least, and get down to business. He walked into his office determinedly. . . .

The first thing that greeted his eyes in the mail before him was an envelope of clippings — reviews of

his book. He began looking them over. Some of the reviewers thought that the author of the " The Fate of Democracies " was taking the difficulties that beset the American republic in altogether too sinister a light. Others, on the contrary, praised the book as a timely warning, and as performing a great service to the country.

One of the critics struck a personal note. He made mention of the fact that this " fundamentally American volume " was written by a man who had come to the United States as an immigrant. . . . The question of restricting immigration was then being agitated in certain quarters. " It would be folly," the writer had digressed from book reviewing to editorializing for a moment, " to close our doors on immigrants when they bring to our shores such splendid material for Americanism, such forceful and uncompromising champions of democratic institutions and republican ideals. . . ."

The reference to his foreign birth stirred memories, which in spite of his determination not to digress from work that morning could not be put out of his mind at will. There was a fleeting memory of his father whom he had not seen in two years. . . . He had not heard from Clara in months. He wondered how Alex Stein was getting on with his department store. His brother Harry, Emil mused with much satisfaction, was at last getting on his feet. Partly with the aid of their brother-in-law and partly through an unlooked for

business boom, Harry had come into possession of a big clothing establishment in Spring Water and was doing exceedingly well.

An office boy brought in a bundle of magazines. Witte shook off his memories and began to look through the mail quickly. Toward the end of the batch he came upon a letter which brought him face to face with the "problem" he was vainly trying to put out of his mind, for that day at least. It was a note from Miss Graves.

She invited him to come out to dinner Sunday. There would be a number of friends there whom he would no doubt be glad to see. . . . There was a reference also to the fact that he had not called at their home for three weeks. Was he busy, or was it worry? Anyway he would be there Sunday, she hoped. . . . Oh, yes, his editorial on women's rights was fine. She was very happy he had written it in that vein — just the way he had outlined it to her. It was bold — splendid. . . . A discreet tenderness ran through the note. Miss Graves was worried over his staying away so long. He saw that clearly. . . .

He tossed all thought of working that morning definitely to the winds. There was no use. The "problem" took its place once more, like the traditional sword, over his head. Witte loved Barbara Graves. He was certain, too, that his love would be returned. He and Barbara had been approaching each

other nearer and nearer for more than a year. He had been a fequent visitor at the Graves' home during that time. Much of his writing, as in the case of the editorial on women's rights, had been done after he had talked things over with her, or with her brother, or both. He began to feel that he could no longer satisfy the desire for her company, for her presence, with an occasional visit. He wanted her to himself, constantly, all the time.

It was not easy to begin with for Witte to admit to himself that the feeling he cherished for Barbara was love. . . . Helen had not entirely ceased to be a part of himself. . . . At night he would lie awake for hours and watch Helen and a little boy — their little boy, the one that should not have died at birth — romp about on a green lawn. . . . He would romp with them — and pet his child and talk to Helen in warm, endearing terms. . . . He had seen a picture of such a happy family somewhere, and the picture had fastened itself in his brain with Helen, their child — their dead son — and himself as the subjects. . . . In his dreams he was leading a delightful family life with Helen and was spending many ecstatic moments with his golden-haired youngster. . . .

One night the picture of Helen, which his imagination had conjured up, had imperceptibly passed over into a picture of Barbara. . . . Only Barbara was not playing with a child on the lawn. Instead she

was sitting in a reclining chair, book in hand. . . .

Gradually the picture of Barbara crowded out the picture of Helen and their baby. There was something every day, a letter, a telephone call, a visit to remind him of Barbara, to draw him nearer to her. He realized that he loved her deeply, tenderly — and drew back writhing in pain — stung by the "problem"—

What stood between Witte and Barbara was race. He did not mince words about it. He did not try to deceive himself. When a little child in Russia, he had learned to fear certain Christian holidays because they meant drunkenness, and that meant breaking into Jewish homes, fighting, brawling — "a calamity upon Jews." In America the prejudice against his race did not manifest itself in physical violence. But there were fine pin-pricks, subtle discriminations, which did not escape his eye, which did not escape his own person at times. His love for the Gentile girl had the effect of awakening and intensifying his racial sympathies.

Of course, Miss Graves had nothing to do with all this. There were no personal religious differences between him and her. He was no disciple of the synagogue. Miss Graves nominally was a Unitarian. Her deism and his antagonism had nothing hostile, nothing conflicting about them. That was what his reason told him. But that did not smooth over the indignities which, though he was not himself suffering

from them at the moment, the Jews were suffering at the time in various parts of the world, at the hands of Christians. And these indignities rankled, burned. . . .

For three months this awakened race feeling had been strewing thorns in the path of his love. He had sought all the literature on the subject from Lessing's "Nathan the Wise" to Zangwill's "The Melting Pot." He read the latest discussions of the "Jewish question" in the Yiddish press of America. He was much impressed with Nathan's speech to the Templar:

> "Are we our nation? What does it signify — nation?
> Are Christian and Jew rather Christian and Jew
> Than Man? Oh, if only I had found in you
> One more whom it suffices to be called Man."

But the broad tolerance of the wise Nathan was not guiding the relations between Jew and Christian in their daily contact, Witte felt. In spite of Lessing and Zangwill the palm had not been extended by the one or accepted by the other. . . . Jew and Christian alike still cherished age-long prejudices against each other. . . . Not Lessing, not Zangwill, but an obscure writer in a small Yiddish weekly, it seemed to Witte, was getting nearer to the crux of the difference between Jew and Christian.

"Christianity is not content with having the Jew merely throw off his creed," this writer wound up an impassioned article. "The last thing Christianity

wants is for the Jew to cease to be a Jew and to become a man. It wants him to become a Christian. Do away with the Ram's Horn, with the Shopar, but only to listen to the ringing of church bells. Christianity wants a world of Christians. . . .

"But," the writer concluded, "as long as there are churches there will be synagogues. As long as church bells will symbolize the Trinity to Christians, the Shopar will speak of the One God to Jews. . . ."

Witte read this article by the obscure Yiddish writer to Miss Graves. They often talked together about creeds and smiled and wondered at the folly of it all . . . man pitted against man, nation against nation. . . . As lief might the trees in the forest engage in deadly combat because of the differences in bark. . . .

Miss Graves accompanied him one Sunday morning on a stroll through the East Side. Within the space of one block they came upon a church and a synagogue. It was a Jewish holiday, and precisely at the hour when men and women were pouring out of the church at one end of the block, men and women were pouring out of the synagogue at the other. The worshipers in each case carried a copy of the Book which first promulgated the injunction, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." They passed each other in grim silence. Yes, here and there even with a look of anger, hatred. . . . Several children snickered "Sheeny" and mimicked a bearded

Jew whose features were not unlike those that artists attribute to the Christ.

Miss Graves noticed this and bit her lips. When she regained control over herself she said:

"Some day humanity will outgrow bigotry and superstition. It is inconceivable that these artificial barriers between races should last for all time."

At which Emil laughed softly, sadly. On his desk lay the unfinished manuscript of an article on the "Rising Tide of Nationalism," which he was writing. Even then all through Europe the smaller nations were in ferment, demanding the right to exist as independent national bodies. As was the case with the Jews in the days of the prophets, each of these nationalities was now clamoring for a king. They welcomed tyranny so long as the tyrants were of their own blood.

He communicated his thoughts to her and his doubts about the quick disappearance of race distinctions and national hatreds.

"Is there to be no end of it?" Miss Graves asked with infinite sadness. "Is this senseless feud between followers of various creeds to rage on for ever? Will the cross, which was intended as a symbol of passion, continue to be identified with persecution? Will the ringing of church bells, intended to signify the ushering in of peace and good will, continue to spell massacres, pogroms upon millions of people? Is there no way out?"

Several days later they were discussing the same problem as they sat on a bench in Prospect Park in the evening.

Witte was more than usually subdued. There seemed to be no way out of this muddle of religious bigotry and persecution. There seemed to be no remedy for this blind, unreasoned race hatred. He feared there was no way out. His love, his happiness were crumbling.

Miss Graves looked helpless, distressed. She caught a glimpse of Witte's face. It was graven with pain. They sat silent for a long time. . . .

She finally broke the silence. Her voice vibrated with feeling. It sounded strange and dreamlike, as if it came from far off. . . .

"Yes," she was saying, "there is a way out. . . . If men would only see it . . . Love — that is the way out. . . . We must all follow the voice of love. . . ."

Witte turned his face from her. He felt that if he looked into her eyes he would say that which his heart cried out, but which his tongue feared to utter.

It was shortly after that evening that he had ceased going to the Graves' home. He stayed away and grappled with his problem and brooded over it for weeks. It was for this absence that her note was now mildly reproaching him. . . .

He picked up the letter and read it once more. A tenderness ran through him. . . . He was nigh unto

tears. . . . What had she to do with a senseless feud of two thousand years? Why hold her to account for the malice of Christendom? The hatred between Christian and Jew was not of her making — not of their making. Why should it mar their lives? Why should it be in the way of their love?

He sat in his chair for some time. . . . A weakness overcame him, a dizziness. . . . Voices seemed to fill the room. . . . His father's voice. . . . And his mother's. . . . There was regret in their voices . . . tears were in their eyes. . . .

He woke from his revery. His mind was cleared. He had decided.

His father would understand him. . . . He always understood him. . . . And his mother, were she alive, she, too, would have stood by him. . . . He could explain it to them. . . . And they would see it. . . . He was not surrendering. . . . He was not deserting. . . . He was merely trying to wrest from life the happiness which was his due . . . the happiness which was human and knew no race or creed. . . .

He rose and lifted the telephone receiver. He called a number. His voice was clear and strangely calm. Suddenly a deep flush came into his face. She was speaking. . . . He lost all control over himself.

"Yes," he stammered, "I'm coming at once — to see you — Barbara —"

He walked out of the office noiselessly. In the street

he walked fast for several blocks. His walking interfered with his thoughts, his visionings. He motioned to a nearby taxi. He gave the address of the Graves' home, leaned back in his seat and closed his eyes.

Barbara met him in the hallway. The astounded yet happy look in her eyes made her beautiful. . . . She extended her hand to him, but he did not notice it. . . . He was looking straight at her face. . . . She had never seen him look in that way at her before. . . . Speech died on her lips. . . . She found it again — in his arms.

THE END

642-3405
Renewal

14 DAY USE
RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED

LOAN DEPT.

This book is due on the last date stamped below, or on the date to which renewed.
Renewed books are subject to immediate recall.

APR 12 1986 3 3

MAY 12 '66 6 8 R C

~~DEC 30 1976~~
~~Jan 30, 1977~~
March 2, 1977

~~REC. CIR.~~ MAR 1 '77

JUL 2 1985

RECEIVED BY

JUN 27 1985

CIRCULATION DEPT.

LD 21A-60m-10,'65
(F7763s10)476B

General Library
University of California
Berkeley

YB 40010

GENERAL LIBRARY - U.C. BERKELEY

B000770991

343156

Joberlin

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY